Daily Report

Latin America

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FBIS-LAT-91-058 *26 March 1991*

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Cuba

Aldana on Impact of Economic Problems on Media

FL2603113691 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 0011 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Report by Alexis Triana in Holguin on the "Exclusivo" program]

[Text] Good evening, Exclusivo, and good evening, Cuba. Here is what has not yet been reported in the national press but is already on Rebelde's Exclusivo. This is that Central Committee Secretary Carlos Aldana, the country's top ideology official, has visited the Tele Cristal studios in this city and granted an interview to this reporter. Among other subjects was the obligatory question of whether current economic limitations will affect the work of Cuban journalism.

[Begin Aldana recording] Yes, without a doubt the technical limitations have a very great influence, because this is a problem not only of human intelligence but also a technological problem, an industrial problem. If we have less paper, if we have to shut down publications, if we have to turn newspapers into weeklies, if the country has only one newspaper, these are objective limitations that without a doubt reduce the level of information. They reduce the necessary diversity of the spheres we address, the different audiences, as well as the necessary diversity of points of view and approaches. These possibilities are also reduced.

This in turn is a challenge. It is a challenge. That is, under these circumstances—which are adverse and which we hope will be transitory, but we cannot consider them a blessing, they are a misfortune—we must encourage creativity to try to salvage this moment, which is fateful from the point of view of what we had achieved. How many of us in other countries, at international events, have boasted about the circulation figures, the number of publications per inhabitant, etc.? All this has collapsed overnight and we find ourselves with a minimum of what we had achieved. We have to entrench ourselves at this minimum and, of course, now there is a much greater commitment to quality than ever before.

I am sure that our intelligence, our tenacity, our persistence under these circumstances will help us because I am sure that ideas, initiatives, solutions, and formulas will now arise now that probably would not have appeared with the accomodationism of before, to put it that way—the laziness, the routine. This does not mean we are satisfied with what is being done, that we do not see that there are deficiencies, that we are not aware that there is also accomodationism, even in our sector.

Often we have lacked daring, we have lacked courage, and we have lacked a spirit of confronting difficulties and complexities. We are aware of this, and neither are we unaware of the fact that sometimes the daring and the courageous have not exactly met with understanding. This has taken away some momentum from an effort that is necessarily subject to and prone to mistakes. In addition, it is judged every day, every minute. It is not like other work where we have to wait for months to see whether or not we are making mistakes. The work of a journalist can be judged right away. It is subject to innumerable interpretations.

So we are aware of these things, but we think we have a corps, and within this corps a vanguard, shall we say, that makes it possible for us to believe that we do have a corps of journalists who can work with us from an advanced position in the difficult situation we are facing. [end recording]

French Delegation Meets Escalona, Tours Matanzas

FL2503201491 Havana Tele Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 25 Mar 91

[Text] Dr. Juan Escalona, president of the National Assembly of the People's Government, held a discussion this morning with the seven French senators who have been visiting our country since last Saturday. The informal exchange of views was conducted in Havana's Convention Center. The senators represent the wide spectrum of French politics, the Union for French Democracy, Rally for the Republic, the governing Socialist Party, the Democratic Left, and the Communist Party. The French Parliament consists of a National Assembly, with a small leftist majority, and a Senate in which the right controls more than 70 percent of the seats. This afternoon the senators will also meet with Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and with Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca.

The French Senate delegation, which is visiting our country by invitation of the National Assembly of the People's Government, toured Matanzas Province and visited some of the tourist facilities in Varadero, the Antonio Guiteras Thermoelectric Plant, and the supertanker port. The head of the delegation, Mr. (Jean Lecanuet), president of the Foreign Affairs, Defense and Armed Forces commissions of the French Parliament, and the other senators received a brief description of the facilities at the fuel complex. It was pointed out during the visit that French enterprises participated in the construction of the new thermoelectric plant, and the deep-water harbor capable of furnishing anchorage to vessels with up to 150 thousand tons of displacement. Prior to his departure, the head of the delegation made an entry in the visitor's log and expressed satisfaction in the fact that Cuban and French specialists were involved in this undertaking.

Cabrisas Meets Venezuelan Foreign Affairs Leader

FL2603025591 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 0003 GMT 26 Mar 91

[From the "Exclusivo" program]

[Text] Cuban Foreign Trade Minister Ricardo Cabrisas has met today in Havana with Ambassador Oscar de Rojas, the director general of International Economy and Cooperation of the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry.

Rojas is visiting Cuba to examine subjects of mutual interest in the context of international trade negotiations. Miss Milena Santana, minister counselor of the Venezuelan Embassy in Cuba, and Eduardo Delgado, director of International Organizations of the Cuban Foreign Trade Ministry, also participated in the meeting.

Machado Ventura Tours Santa Clara Hospital

FL2603024591 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 0002 GMT 26 Mar 91

[From the "Exclusivo" program]

[Text] During a tour of the new hospital and metalworking plant in Santa Clara, Politburo member Jose Ramon Machado Ventura has stressed the urgent need to conserve a maximum of available resources. During his tour of the medical center, the party leader received information about the institution's current status and the operation of its equipment. Later, accompanied by Jose Tomas Cardenas, first party secretary in Villa Clara, Machado Ventura visited various workshops at the metalworking factory where the deep-well pumps, bicycle tire laminates, air compressors, components for the future Jibara cement plant, and floodgates for dams are manufactured.

Inter-Caribbean Affairs

CIES Calls For Integration, Social Priorities

FL2503232091 Bridgetown CANA in English 1748 GMT 25 Mar 91

[Text] Washington, March 25, CANA—The Inter-American Economic and Social Council (CIES) ended its 25th annual meeting here at the weekend with a call for stronger regional integration and priority attention to problems of social interest.

The Organisation of American States (OAS) Council emphasized effective programming and coordination in technical cooperation to promote economic and social development of the Caribbean region. It approved 1992-1993 OAS programming guidelines, assigning priority to poverty, trade, employment generation, and tourism, among other issues. CIES also agreed to postpone consideration of the economic and social challenges for the 1990's, the theme of the meeting, to a special ministerial meeting within the next few months.

The CIES meeting, held from March 19 to 22 at the OAS headquarters, made recommendations and expressed positions on a variety of issues of regional and international interest. It agreed to request CIES executive secretariat to convoke, with the Inter-American Council for Education, Science, and Culture (CIECC), a forum of university, research institution, and public and private productive sector representatives, to examine mechanisms for scientific and technological exchange.

The Council expressed satisfaction at the coming resumption of Uruguay Round GATT multilateral trade negotiations, and stated the need for the negotiations to have flexibility, and proceed positively and evenly to produce satisfactory results for OAS member states.

Among other issues dealt with was St. Vincent and the Grenadines' offer to host the seventh joint CIES/CIECC policy, and a programming and coordination meeting for the Caribbean sub-region in the first quarter of 1993, which was noted by the Council.

A resolution was adopted, accepting the offer of the Government of Panama to host the 16th travel congress in Panama City, Panama. The 15th meeting was held in Jamaica. Other resolutions taken included one to convoke the sixth Inter-American Telecommunications Conference at the ministerial level, in Santiago, Chile from September 23 through 27, 1991.

Caricom Meets on Regional Marine Resource Issues

FL2503231091 Bridgetown CANA in English 1738 GMT 25 Mar 91

[Text] Georgetown, Guyana, March 25, CANA—Caribbean Community (Caricom) [Caribbean Common Market] agriculture, foreign affairs, and legal officials are meeting here Monday and Tuesday to review a draft agreement on regional use of marine resources.

The Caricom states, represented by permanent secretaries and other officials, are seeking a cooperative arrangement on the management of their Exclusive Economic Zones (FEZ's) at the meeting, a follow-up to one last May. At the May meeting, with the advice of technical experts from the Food and Agriculture Organisation and other regional institutions, the officials began to establish a policy framework for the cooperative management of marine resources.

The current meeting is reviewing a draft intergovernmental agreement on cooperation and harmonization in the management of the marine resources within the EEZ's of Caricom member countries. The draft agreement seeks to set up a regional mechanism to administer measures, allowing national fishing vessels special access to fishing grounds of sister Caricom states in preference to fishing vessels from non-Caricom countries.

It sets out uniform minimum conditions of access for fishing vessels of the 13 Caricom states, and includes proposals for a regional fisheries register to monitor operations of regional and extra-regional fishing vessels. The draft also considers human resource development, ocean resource management, and marine scientific research, as well as the protection of the marine resources, in collaboration with relevant regional institutions.

UK Official Reassures Windwards Banana Growers

FL2603000491 Bridgetown CANA in English 2044 GMT 25 Mar 91

[Text] Castries, St. Lucia, March 25, CANA—A senior British official has held talks here with Windward Islands

banana industry officials about concerns over the future of preferential treatment in the United Kingdom [UK] market.

The official, Sarah Rowland-Jones, dealt with reports of preferential treatment for Central American exports, and concerns that a European Community, 40-million European Currency Unit (ECU) assistance package to Nicaragua and Honduras could stiffen competition for Windwards bananas.

A government statement after the talks said Rowland-Jones, principal desk officer in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, also met with Trade Minister George Mallet and Agriculture Minister Ferdinand Henry. The British official's responsibilities include the coordination of United Kingdom policy with regard to African, Caribbean, and Pacific-European Economic Community (ACP-EEC) matters.

Bananas shipped from the Windward Islands enjoy preferential access to the UK market, but there are fears such treatment may be lost after Europe becomes a single market in 1992. The statement said Rowland-Jones told officials the grant of 40 million ECU's to the two Central American states was [?not] intended to encourage private sector export-oriented business.

"It appears that while banana production as an export-oriented activity was not excluded from the terms of the grant, encouragement would not be given to activities in that area," the statement said.

As regards proposed common rules for trade in bananas, on which Caribbean governments are awaiting an EEC reply, Rowland-Jones reported that an inter-services group, dealing with the matter, was yet to complete its work.

Trade Minister Mallet used the meeting to re-emphasize the importance of the banana industry to the Windward Islands, and "the absolute need for maintenance of the safeguard provided for in the banana protocol, to allow the industry to survive."

He recognised that product quality was essential, and assured that serious efforts were in progress in the Windward Islands to solve quality problems, the statement said.

Barbados

Parliament, Press Clash on Reporting of 'Asides'

FL2503180091 Bridgetown CANA in English 1405 GMT 23 Mar 91

[Report by Colin King]

[Text] Bridgetown, Barbados, March 23, CANA—Barbadian MPs [members of Parliament] and representatives of the news media are at odds over the inclusion of parliamentary cross-talk in press reports.

Speaker of the House of Assembly, Lawson Weekes, got support from fellow parliamentarians, and strong reaction in the media, after he warned the press last Monday [18 March] that "asides" spoken by parliamentarians during debates were not part of the discussion and must not be published.

The BARBADOS ADVOCATE newspaper responded with a critical front page editorial, while the Barbados Association of Journalists (BAJ) and Caribbean Association of Media Workers (Camwork) called for a meeting with the speaker to clarify the issue.

The speaker's comments followed a report in the SUNDAY ADVOCATE, on a parliamentarian "losing his seat" when the piece of furniture collapsed under him in the house. The article also carried quotes of heckling in the house.

THE NATION newspaper also prints a weekend parliamentary column—"from the gallery"—flavoured with off-the-parliamentary-record witticisms, taunts and other remarks regularly exchanged among members of Parliament.

Former Prime Minister Bernard St John, now on the opposition bench, backed the speaker and vowed to ask that the public gallery be cleared every week, if the press continues to report on asides. Deputy Prime Minister Philip Greaves also took up the issue of parliamentary reporting, after the ADVOCATE's critical editorial.

The ADVOCATE had said: "A little power is a dangerous thing and would appear applicable to the speaker.

"Asides in Parliament often give a clear indication of the seriousness or otherwise with which members are addressing the people's business.... Attempts at censorship of reports of such behaviour will not be easily or quickly accepted by the media.

"...the speaker should reconsider his ill-considered advice to the press and if necessary take advice on the subject. It is unnecessary and unbecoming for the speaker and the press to be involved in such controversy."

Greaves, leader of government business, brought the editorial to the House Wednesday, suggesting that it offended not only the speaker, but the entire House. Opposition leader Henry Forde said he was appalled at the attack on the speaker and on the House.

Forde said he detected no attempt to restrict the freedom of the press in the house, and interpreted the speaker's ruling on asides to mean that asides which are totally irrelevant to a debate should not be published.

The BAJ Executive met Thursday to consider Weekes' and St John's statements. It found they "implied serious threats to press freedom and the rights of journalists assigned to cover Parliament".

On legal advice, it decided it would approach the speaker for a meeting to clarify what constitutes "asides" in parliamentary reporting.

Camwork President Rickey Singh told CANA he shared the concern about "the possible implications for future reporting of the proceedings of Parliament unless there could be a proper understanding of what constitutes 'asides', and, when are asides part of the official record of the House of Assembly".

"Camwork agrees with the BAJ for first seeking a meeting with the speaker of Parliament to clarify the matter which has provoked the controversy.

"Camwork feels that the speaker would have a proper explanation to offer when a meeting is held.... It is the kind of problem that could easily be defused rather than being blown out of all proportion."

In the first "From the Gallery" column since the controversy started, THE NATION newspaper's weekend editor Tony Vanterpool wrote Friday: "I suppose the main offender when it came to the publication of asides has been the gallery."

According to Vanterpool, the publication of asides has been a regular NATION feature for more than a decade and there had been no previous complaints.

"... asides or no asides, the gallery, which has a wide readership, will continue to grace the pages of the weekend NATION in its intended form - a parliamentary sketch—rather than, as some members might think or desire, a straightforward coverage of debate," he wrote before proceeding to review the week in the house—minus aside.

Bermuda

Banking Industry Concerned Over UK Tax Changes

FL2503162491 Bridgetown CANA in English 1618 GMT 24 Mar 91

[Text] Hamilton, Bermuda, March 24, CANA—Bermuda's multi-million dollar private trust industry stands to lose a valuable source of business following new British Government proposals unveiled in the recent United Kingdom budget, the weekly BERMUDA SUN newspaper said.

"The budget has effectively put the bite on new trusts set up in Bermuda and other offshore domiciles to exploit a weakness in UK capital gains tax regulations," said the SUN's business editor Roger Scotton.

In addition, Scotton said, managers of hundreds of Bermuda-based trust vehicles, many of them handled by the island's three banks, were scrambling to ascertain the impact of the proposals on their clients' existing arrangements.

A slowdown in the industry, which employs dozens of local banking and legal staff, could affect Bermuda's ability to earn foreign exchange, he said.

The budget proposals were aimed at plugging Britain's legal loophole on capital gains taxes—what financial advisers like to refer to as an "opportunity to mitigate" the country's 40 per cent gains tax, he said.

In the past, wealthy UK residents have been able to defer payment of this tax indefinitely by placing their assets in an offshore trust set up in Bermuda or, more commonly, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

The tax became due when and if capital was repatriated from the trust to Britain.

But under the new rules, Scotton said, certain beneficiaries are to become liable on gains as they arise within the trust, rather than when they receive a distribution from it.

"This change is expected to apply only to newly-settled trusts and assets added to existing trusts after the March 19 budget," Scotton said. Additionally, onshore trusts would no longer be allowed to transfer offshore without crystallising a tax liability.

No official figures are available but Bermuda is thought to be home for up to 1,000 trusts established by British investors.

Haiti

Aristide Inaugurates New Military Barracks

FL2503221491 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1700 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Excerpts] President Aristide inaugurated a new 200-bed dormitory and game room for the recruits yesterday at the Dessalines barracks. During the inauguration ceremony President Aristide said that nothing can destroy the marriage between the people and the Army. Colonel Alix Sylva, however, gave the first address.

[Begin Sylva recording] In fact, I made a visit here as commander. I was extremely surprised to see the circumstances under which the soldiers were living. There were rats running around in this dormitory; there were spider webs on all the windows, and dust was just about everywhere. The president who was visiting here said the guys cannot live under such conditions; we must do something for them. [passage omitted] [end recording]

President Aristide, who spoke later, said he is listening to the problems the soldiers are facing in both Port-au-Prince and in the province garrisons. According to President Aristide, the marriage between the Army and the people will not be sterile. The union will give birth to security and change. Let us listen.

[Begin Aristide recording] Military brothers of mine, if a marriage is good when one partner speaks, you can hear [her] voice in your voice. When Colonel Sylva just spoke, I heard his voice in my own voice. I do not have to say much because he picked up what was in my heart and said it to you.

I congratulate you for your participation in cleaning up so that you can breathe easier where you sleep. This is only a beginning. We will not stop here. The entire Haitian Army will be refreshed as time goes by, as Colonel Sylva said.

I will just add a small word. Listening to news last evening and this morning, I heard complaints coming from the Delmas area, complaints coming from Thomassique, complaints coming from Fort-Dimanche. All this happens because there are quarrels and disagreements. It is normal to have slight quarrels in a marriage. What signals trouble is when there is no listening, dialogue, comprehension or redress. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Jamaica

New IMF Agreement, Lower Interest Rates Sought

FL2603135091 Bridgetown CANA in English 1208 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Text] Kingston, Jamaica, March 25, CANA—An International Monetary Fund (IMF) team visited Jamaica last week for negotiations on a new economic support agreement with the government, financial sources said. The agreement will replace one for U.S. 105 million dollars which ends on March 31.

The sources said the negotiations were expected to be tough as the government was seeking, among other things, to get the Fund to agree on a proposal for lowering interest rates. A high interest rate regime was introduced to protect the value of the Jamaica dollar against the U.S. dollar. Jamaican producers, however, complained that this policy was stifling the development of the manufacturing sector.

Some analysts predicted a drop in interest rates would cause the Jamaica dollar to tumble against its American counterpart, thus increasing the inflation rate. One observer said until Jamaica improved its foreign exchange reserves, lowering interest rates would be "suicidal." Others noted however that the high interest regime had not dampened high demand for foreign exchange.

Several analysts said they could not predict highlights of the new agreement as they were unsure whether Jamaica would pass or fail the March 31 IMF performance test under a current agreement.

"It is hard to determine what is on the credit side given the recent increases in oil prices and the downturn in tourism earnings brought on by the Gulf war," said one stock broker. Jamaica passed the last quarterly test in December.

St. Kitts and Nevis

Guatamalan Sugar Imported for Domestic Market

FL2503212091 Bridgetown CANA in English 1707 GMT 25 Mar 91

[Text] Basseterre, St. Kitts, March 25, CANA—The state-owned St. Kitts Sugar Manufacturing Corporation (SSMC) has confirmed importing 2,500 tonnes of sugar from Guatemala for the domestic market.

An official said the purchase was intended to free up locally produced sugar for export to the United Kingdom where St Kitts-Nevis receives preferential prices under the Lome Convention. St. Kitts-Nevis has an annual export quota of 16,500 tonnes, which it was unable to meet last year because of low production following major damage to the sugar crop caused by Hurricane Hugo in 1989.

The official, justifying the decision to import sugar in the face of opposition criticism, said St. Kitts-Nevis ran the risk of having its U.K. quota permanently reduced if it again fails to meet its contractual obligations this year.

"Recovery takes time, and everything is being done to avoid the need to declare a shortfall for a second year and risk having our UK allocation permanently reduced," the SSMC official said in a statement. "This year is particularly crucial because of the need to make good the shortfall from last year."

Sugar output here this year is projected at 20,000 tonnes, up from 15,000 tonnes last year.

Costa Rica

* Editorial Reviews Retirement Plans' Inequities

*'Serious Problem' Exists

91CA0076A San Jose LA NACION in Spanish 4 Jan 91 p 4

[Editorial by Jorge Corrales Q.]

[Text] To get some idea of the impact pension systems have on the economy, we will describe three of them: the IVM [Disability, Old Age and Death Benefits System] of the Costa Rican Social Security Fund; some private systems; and the RESP [Special Public Sector Systems].

Some features of the RESP have been brought to my attention, and the Costa Rican people need to be aware of this serious problem. The RESP consist of 19 different public sector pension systems. They cover almost 40 percent of government employees, or to put it another way, roughly 16 percent of the population. These systems are funded by the national budget and amount to 3 percent of the total value of the production of finished goods and services of the economy in one year. The largest of the RESP is the Teachers' Pension System, which includes 82 percent of the total of those covered, the Judicial Authority System, which involves 6 percent, and a similar percentage in the Finance System.

Of the 19 RESP, 10 are based on employee contributions, which in some cases are minute contributions for the benefits granted, and the remaining nine are wholly financed by the government. It is estimated that 42 percent of the government's total expenditures on pensions go to only 16 percent of the population (this is for people who are interested in the issue of progressiveness in government spending).

Retired workers covered by the RESP receive a pension three to six times higher than under the IVM system, for an average of 26 to 29 years, since there is definitely no pension fund covering each of these systems, with an average retirement age of 50 (in some cases, there is no minimum retirement age). Moreover, the pension is equivalent to the average salary earned during the last year worked, even up to 100 percent of the salary of the last month worked, and pensions are adjusted every year, as the employee's salary is adjusted while he is working.

These data show how important it is to revise the RESP as soon as possible, as these pensions are not viable in the short term, their benefits are excessive, and they are distributed in a highly regressive manner. Their extremely high cost to the government and the economy (which would increase if they were to remain unchanged) will multiply the serious problems facing the treasury. The ostrich solution—hiding our heads in the sand—is not a feasible option for coping with this mess.

* Pension Reforms Sought

91CA0076B San Jose LA NACION in Spanish 10 Jan 91 p 6

[Article by Nelson Murillo]

[Text] Deputies from various parts of the political spectrum yesterday urged reforming the pension system to avert its collapse; the executive is now preparing a pension reform bill to be considered during the current legislative session.

Social Christian Party member Roberto Tovar, chairman of the Finance Issues Commission, said that a number of studies by international experts show that within two years pensions will create a 20 billion colones deficit if they are not reformed as soon as possible.

Although the details of the plan to be presented to the Legislative Assembly within a few days are still unknown, he said that the general intention is to change the retirement age, raise the portion to be paid by future beneficiaries, and tax pensions as a privilege or luxury.

In the view of the deputy leader of of the liberationist group, Alejandro Soto, "that bill should have been sent to Congress some time ago, for the IMF has said that part of the distortions in the Costa Rican economy are caused by the number of pension systems (19)."

He noted that his party has introduced a reform in the tax package—which is being considered in the third debate—to make pensions (of 45,000 colones and above) subject to income tax. This proposal will become part of the second tax adjustment plan, as the first contains only the increase in the sales tax from 10 to 13 percent.

Soto said that of the 117.5 billion colones contained in the government budget for the current year, 12 billion colones are earmarked for pension systems, since these systems are not not self-sustaining. He remarked that National Liberation needs to analyze carefully the bill that will go to Congress, given their interest in "acting responsibly, and not as a vote-getting stratagem."

According to United People legislator Rodrigo Gutierrez, pensions should range between one and five times the minimum wage, based on the number of years worked and the type of job.

He added that the minimum age for receiving pension benefits should be set between 50 and 65: "It is not the same thing for a teacher or any other professional to retire as it is for a bricklayer." Gutierrez does not consider it necessary to combine the systems, but Tovar said that this is not included in the reform.

Yesterday the Liberationist deputies continued to criticize the sales tax increase. Today four of them will speak. If no one else decides to speak, the leadership would consider discussion of the completed plan, and it would finally come up for a vote during the third debate.

If that happens, the party leaders would probably submit a motion calling for a 15-day recess, since the Executive has still not sent new initiatives to be considered during the current special session, which concludes on 31 [sic] April.

Among the bills expected from the administration are a special budget proposal (to help the victims of the 22 December Alajuela earthquake), the second tax package, and a hydrocarbons bill.

El Salvador

FMLN Commander on Negotiations, Elections

PA2403234591 (Clandestine) Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador 0000 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Interview with Commander Joaquin Villalobos, member of the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) General Command, by unidentified local reporters; place and date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Reporter] Commander, the dialogue issue is quite interesting and we could continue talking about this matter much longer. I would like to ask you, however, given the fact that the process of dialogue is progressing, are we on the path toward peace?

[Villalobos] I do think that we are on the path toward peace. The negotiations are at a point of no return. In the beginning we talked about what to do when the talks seemed to bog down. This is similar to reaching the crossroads, once you do so you cannot go back. The government cannot turn back from the dialogue. The negotiations have created a serious framework including UN participation. We are currently at the core of the negotiations and we are addressing the most sensitive issues which will result in some critical developments. Obviously, there are forces that will attempt to extricate themselves from the negotiations. You can imagine the pressure on those individuals who have turned this war into a very profitable business.

If a comparison can be made between Nicaragua and El Salvador, the strategy used against Nicaragua was to prevent it from having access to the dollar. By contrast, El Salvador was flooded with dollars having received $4 billion in aid. Almost one million Salvadorans who live in the United States—also the result of the war—have sent back a similar amount of dollars in the past years. If you add to this what little the country has produced and the preferential treatment on the part of many humanitarian aid institutions, El Salvador is indeed very fortunate. That is why we think that the end of the war need not be traumatic for the nation. That is also why the people should not feel that they were better off during the war. Such thinking would be totally absurd.

Some people in the Armed Forces and the strong economic sectors, however, have an interest in extending the war indefinitely because it has become a very profitable business. Such groups fear that the end of the war would mean an end to their profits. We believe that we have to fight so that the funds spent on the war can be used to transform El Salvador into a developed nation. That is why we insist that the issue of demilitarization is a crucial ingredient in the negotiations. It would be beneficial if the idea is accepted and is understood on the international. This could be transformed into a pilot project for national consensus and development.

[Reporter] Let us talk about the FMLN's willingness to negotiate. Frankly, many consider you to be bloodthirsty individuals who also do not wish to end the war. How willing is the FMLN to end the conflict?

[Villalobos] The fact you mentioned, that we are portrayed as bloodthirsty individuals, must be the work of the people who oppose our political project. Also, there is an outright campaign against the FMLN characterized by efforts to portray it as a monster. It is the media that generates this kind of an opinion. I do not think, however, that the majority of the people hold such views.

Take a look at the Arena [National Republican Alliance] campaign strategy during the past elections of portraying the FMLN as the opposition. The FMLN was depicted as death, horror, and even as child murderers; yet, how many votes did the opposition get? The outcome of the election suggests that either the people do not believe Arena, or that we are an enviable political force that will cause them even more grief.

With regard to the FMLN's willingness to negotiate, the issue must be based on the specific facts and on actions. Let us turn to the facts. We have made proposals to speed up the negotiations and to reach a short-term agreement. These proposals are based on true facts, not on rhetoric or an attempt to label the other party as the villain. We do not want this, we only present true facts. Everyone accepts that the Armed Forces must be purged, even they themselves have agreed to this. Everyone accepts that impunity must end. Everyone accepts that the judicial system must be reformed, everyone has stated this, even members of the judicial system have said so. Everyone accepts that human rights must be respected and that such rights are guaranteed. In light of the recent elections, however,it has became very clear that the electoral system is totally inadequate.

All this has been accepted by everyone but, how well does the government understand this? Let us refer to what I have told you about the cease-fire. Is it or is it not a reality that the FMLN exists as a military and political force? Yes, it is. Everyone accepts this. If this bothers the military that is another matter. If the military do not like the situation, why have they not been able to solve it by military means at their disposal? They cannot hope to solve within a year or two months what they have not been able to do for years. If we accept this as an objective truth, if we make a significant change in the Armed Forces, and if we objectively accept the reality—meaning the current state of the war—then we can find a

solution to the conflict. If we end the war and if the political groups state their views... [changes thought] we are not afraid of that.

On the subject of electoral issues, we have said that it is worth losing the elections if it leads to deep changes in the electoral system. A victory in the elections is worthless, however, without such changes because the winner will not be able to rule. He will be constantly threatened; he will constantly have a gun pointed to his head; the military will set the rules; and economic pressures exerted by powerful interest groups will eventually allow them to do as they please. Such situation will weaken any government, and it will fail to carry out its program. So much the better, let us take advantage of the 70,000 dead; let us take advantage of what has happened throughout the years; let us apply a antidote against the war; and let us change the country.

[Reporter] What is your opinion, in general terms, about the latest election results—I do not mean the electoral system but rather the results of the elections and the way in which they were conducted?

[Villalobos] We are concerned because we did not obstruct the elections this time. Arena did it.

[Reporter] What are your views about the obstruction and why...?

[Villalobos, interrupting] In other words, we think there was an obstruction that was carried out through a series of technical measures. We believe that this should be politically analyzed and the problem must be solved. We believe that the low voter turnout was provoked by a series of measures, such as lack of transportation, changes in voting tables, lack of order, changes in electoral lists, and so on. This is not difficult to do. I can say: People who register and cast their ballot at such and such a table are inclined to vote for the opposition, so I will obstruct their participation using technical means.

We declared a truce, and the elections were held under truly exceptional conditions. The elections could have even exploited by claiming that they represented a political blow; yet it turns out that a large part of the population did not vote, not because we prevented it, but because they intentionally prevented it.

In addition, if a party which is almost out of existence—meaning the dictatorship's old party, the PCN [National Concilition Party]—is the one that will reportedly solve Arena's problem of achieving a majority at the legislative assembly, then this is something which should be taken into consideration and, well, it smells fishy.

[Reporter] It seems as if the situation has turned against Arena, bearing in mind that its electoral strength decreased in these elections.

[Villalobos, interrupting] Quite the contrary, it is something that....

[Reporter, interrupting] But...but....

[Villalobos, interrupting] There are positive elements that should also be taken into consideration, but I am talking about the negative part. The agreements on the electoral system.... [changes thought] The problems with the electoral system are key issues and we must point this out. This must be changed, transformed, and subject to thorough analysis and serious changes. I am talking about registry problems, the conditions under which the parties participate in the elections, and demilitarization.

The good thing is that Arena failed to achieve a majority as far as the vote count goes. This is obviously a positive thing; we certainly feel it is positive. Also, the elections in San Salvador, meaning the electoral results, are equally positive. The results prove that it would have been preferrable not to have an obstruction or a fraud in favor of the PCN, and the opposition would have achieved a parliamentary majority. This would have been even better but, well, we hope that this can be corrected in terms of [word indistinct]. We hope that the parties will put up a fight and prevent fraud, but we still think that the results are important.

[Reporter] The FMLN's position concerning the elections was not clear. The elections were not obstructed because a truce was declared, yet the FMLN did not endorse the elections.

[Villalobos] Yes, bearing in mind the possibility of a fraud or a similar situation, we did not want to compromise ourselves by legitimizing something that is not the result of a negotiation. We are willing to endorse, and actively participate in, an electoral process that is the result of a negotiation. We are willing to fully participate in an electoral process with all our capabilities, meaning all our human and material resources, but the elections must be the result of a negotiation process.

[Reporter] When could this happen?

[Villalobos] Well, this could be possible in the measure that we achieve progress [words indistinct]. This could be possible, but—given the current conditions and after what has happened—it seems that we are being sent a signal telling us that this is not the road. Centrist and leftist groups were organized in the country in 1972 and 1977, and they won in 1972 and 1977. We now have a similar situation but the elections were obstructed, and a last-minute fraud was perpetrated, despite the war and the pressure exerted by the international community.

Therefore, we must struggle for honest elections; we must struggle through negotiations to change the system. We must, well, know how [words indistinct] our military might—meaning the military power we have accumulated throughout the years—in order to attain our country's democratization. In fact, referring to military issues, we have clearly stated that our military strategy right now, and throughout this period, is strictly of a defensive and retaliatory nature. The Army is now announcing that an offensive is coming. I made some

statements to LA JORNADA in Mexico and said that we would recover our territories. That is how the rumor about the offensive started.

[Reporter] It is a good idea to clarify this because there has been much confusion about it.

[Villalobos] That is right, there was confusion, and this is precisely where propaganda comes in. Let it be clearly understood that we are not announcing any offensive. However, if we are attacked, we will reply. It is not fair that the Army bombed Guazapa, as everyone in San Salvador saw. The Armed Forces are staging operations in areas where they do not have any control, and while they are searching for our hospitals they kill our doctors and harass the civilian population. That is not fair.

[Reporter] If there are no plans to launch an offensive, how can you explain some of your actions, such as the recent attack on the Escalon residential area? The residents were very worried and anguished over that attack.

[Villalobos] In the first place, the attack against the Escalon residential area took place before Ponce said we were preparing an offensive. That attack against the Escalon residential area is an answer. It is not an offensive action, even though in tactical terms it can be described as such.

[Reporter] It was an answer? To what?

[Villalobos] It was an answer to the number of operations that the Army had been conducting in our areas for the last two months, to the bombings over Guazapa that the press reported were very intensive. When the Armed Forces received the A-37's, they began to bomb various areas continuously.

It was also an answer to the problems of repression, to the 15 peasants who were slaughtered on the outskirts of San Salvador. In addition, it was a political answer to the tensions they were trying to create concerning the electoral atmosphere of the rightist Arena [Nationalist Republican Alliance], which was intimidating the opposition. In political terms, that was aimed against us.

In other words, there is not going to be a war here just against us, but we must also say: Here we are; do not forget this is not going to be that easy. To that effect, it is an answer, we are showing them where we have our posts. Where are their command posts? In what region, in what area? We have to make them feel there is a war going on. If they do not want to feel the war, we are going to make their leaders feel there is a war.

So it is an answer; it is a defensive military strategy. We are not planning now to launch a military offensive to seek victory and change the correlation of forces. No, if they do not bother us, we will not bother them.

[Reporter] Some sectors feel that now with the UDN and Democratic Convergence joining the Legislative Assembly, the FMLN has a voice and vote in our country.

[Villalobos] This is part of the version that says everyone who is in the opposition supports the FMLN. In political terms, I would say we should be grateful that some now feel we even have deputies. That means the FMLN is so powerful that it has gone from the mountains to the Legislative Assembly, and passed through the social organizations and just about every organization that says no to the government.

Actually, that is false. The rightist groups and the groups in power in El Salvador are engaging in what I would call [words indistinct]. Apparently, they just cannot understand that saying: No, I do not agree or I think differently, is part of the most universally accepted categories in politics, and by the majority of societies in the world. That is the same thought that led to the war. I think they should think differently. [words indistinct]

That should not constitute a problem. They should understand that the world has changed. That is why I say that we are not the Berlin Wall of El Salvador, but they are. They are opposed to democratic ideas. The Saddam Husayn of El Salvador is the Army, not us.

[Reporter] Commander, your recent statements to THE NEW YORK TIMES in which you talk about abandoning the classic Marxist and communist stand and about changing the attitude of attaining power through armed struggle have been widely commented on in our country. The statements refer to joining political paths within a democratic system. What does this mean?

[Villalobos] This represents an evolution, more than a 180-degree turn. If you analyze them throughout history, it is inexact to say that the thoughts of the FMLN and of the Salvadoran left in general led to a program equivalent to what I saw in the USSR and Eastern Europe. That is not correct if we analyze it, as the left participated in elections when we took up arms and proposed the GDR [Revolutionary Democratic Government]. The FMLN has always advocated a broad plan. Now, how many believed that is a different story, but the left advocated a truly democratic broad plan. On the other hand, concerning the definition of Marxist or non-Marxist, the problem is that this has always been viewed as a strictly ideological problem. We would be falling into something that is practically religious. Marxism is a theory of social science, and as such it serves to analyze realities. It is a theory that is centuries old. It has evolved. Situations have changed to prevent a struggle of classes.

How does this apply to the situation in Europe? When you have the problem of the middle classes, the ecological problem, now that is something entirely different. Situations have completely changed. The political theory has also evolved. To think that there is only one would be like saying: If I am a biologist, I am going to declare myself in favor of such and such a trend of biology, and I state I will not move from that, and that is the only one. Then that is religion and faith; it is not a political theory. The FMLN wages politics, and politics bear a relation to

the analysis of the truth. In order to analyze reality, Marxism is only an instrument.

[Reporter] Do you make no distinction between Marxism and Leninism, which is the taking of power by means that we consider to be more peaceful?

[Villalobos] I do not think that this is just a problem of attaining power, but also one of the organization of the party, the issue of democratic centralism, a single party system. There are some things we do not share, including the dictatorship of the proletariat. Those are things that have been proven do not adapt to our situation, and historically speaking they are being disproved in Eastern Europe. The issue of the single party is something else that creates a political and social lack of mobility. I would present it in another manner: Marxism allegedly proposes an analysis of society based on dialectics, and dialectics establishes differences as the driving force in history. Eastern Europe was the kingdom of immobility.

Political Group 'Crusade' Rejects 'Negotiations'

PA2503165391 San Salvador EL DIARIO DE HOY in Spanish 22 Mar 91 p 16

[Statement issued by the Pro-Peace and Work Crusade in San Salvador; date not given]

[Text] The Pro-Peace and Work Crusade, as a civic-patriotic front, considers it necessary and urgent to raise its voice, because it views with concern the speed with which events are unfolding that will lead to our fatherland's complete surrender.

We cannot fail to take note that everything that is happening is taking place within a framework of international pressure with the consent of our civilian and military authorities and, of course, with the complicity of certain pseudo-clergymen, who have always backed this plot against El Salvador.

The things about the dialogue which, during the regime of Duarte's Christian Democrats, made our hair stand on end, are next to nothing compared with the "negotiations" to which we have been led by the current government, with its tolerant and pusilanimous attitudes. The Salvadoran people want peace, but not at the expense of hampering basic principles that will never be negotiable—our constitution, our territory, and the existence of the Armed Forces.

The Salvadoran people did not vote for a conservative party so that as time passed by it could throw out its nationalist principles and turn to popular pluralism that will only benefit our nation's murderers. From the looks of things, the government plans to sacrifice most of the country's honest, hard-working, and decent people in favor of a minority of terrorist criminals and ingratiate itself with a group of nations that care little or nothing about what may happen to the Salvadoran people.

How can we ask foreigners to respect our laws if the deputies who supposedly represent the interests of the people in the Legislative Assembly are the first to violate it? How can we not be confused or disappointed when we hear that the members of the Legislative Assembly Directorate say "that the Constitution cannot be negotiated," but then state that structural changes will be made to the Constitution? Will those changes include the modification of Article 84 to give part of our territory to the FMLN [Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front]? Will Articles 211 and 212 be modified to raise the murderers of the FMLN to the status of our Armed Forces? Will the Army and the terrorist mobs be merged or, perhaps to better facilitate things, will the deputies be thinking of modifying Article 248 to open the doors once and for all to great constitutional and legal aberrations and arbitrary actions?

The much publicized "secret document" that THE NEW YORK TIMES reported is an open secret, because everyone knows that as a result of the pressure exerted by the United Nations and the U.S. State Department, a commission of the Secretariat of the United Nations will be installed to revise the file of each soldier over the past 15 years. The commission will later try them and decide whether or not they can remain in the Armed Forces. What this document does not include is the possibility of creating a commission of courageous people and legal experts who will investigate and try the murderers of the FMLN for the thousands of massacres and the destruction of our fatherland's economy. We refuse to believe or accept what terrorist Villalobos said in a cynical manner about "taking advantage of the 70,000 dead."

Why are negotiations held secretly? The decisions that are made there affect not just the government delegation and the FMLN. They are perhaps the least interested in the negotiations, because we must remember that most of these gentlemen are more subject to accommodating international pressure than to their own principles. What do Mr. Alvaro de Soto or Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar care about the division of our country? How are they affected by the dismantling of our Armed Forces, which guarantee our sovereignty and public order? These gentlemen, as long as they become famous and are nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, will support either the left or the right, depending on the offer and the awards. The sad and contradictory part is that they are saying that they are working for the Salvadoran people, when in reality we can see that outsiders are deciding the future of our fatherland.

The Pro-Peace and Work Crusade prides itself on maintaining loyalty to its genuine patriotic principles. Therefore, we maintain our position of rejecting the dialogue and negotiation process, because the enemies of the fatherland have cunningly made use of the motto of peace to keep us in a state of terror and violence. Thus, they made the government and the High Command fall into the trap of believing that by not defending themselves, they are averting war. The words of terrorist Villalobos have been an arrogant and cynical affront to

the concessions made by the government and the effectiveness of the High Command. He asks that if the Armed Forces have not been able to defeat the guerrillas in 12 years, how will they be able to defeat them in two months? Gentlemen in the government, deputies, and High Command members: Do you not think that 12 years of pain, death, and destruction is already enough punishment for the Salvadoran people for you now to come out, as a corollary to this tragedy, and give away our beloved fatherland, or is it that you no longer have principles or love for your fatherland, which would make you fulfill your duty of punishing the murderers?

Amid the euphoria of the 1 June 1989 triumph, Mr. Cristiani stated: "We will enforce compliance with the law. Our people need security and we will give it to them by enforcing the law, not simply the use of force. However, we will undoubtedly act with legal energy in confronting the disorder, destruction, and anarchy that has battered our people."

Mr. President: We are waiting for you to fulfill your constitutional mandate. You must respond to your people and not to the foreign pressure.

We demand that the High Command of the Armed Forces always enforce compliance with our Constitution, in the memory of those who fell wearing the uniform of the fatherland and for the honor of the military institution itself. The Armed Forces will always guarantee the existence of the country.

"Victory is achieved when there are brave men who know how to steer their people by brandishing the sword in one hand and the cross in the other."

OAS Observer Group Discounts Election Fraud

PA2603043091 San Salvador LA PRENSA GRAFICA in Spanish 25 Mar 91 p 43

[Text] Interviewed after the 10 March elections on reports of alleged election fraud, Dr. Mario Gonzalez, president of the OAS observer mission, has said that there were no anomalies, adding that there were no indications that the Central Electoral Council [CCE] was willing to commit fraud.

The OAS observers stayed in the country before, during, and after the electoral process and said that if there were any anomalies, these were not purposely caused by the CCE or any political force.

After the elections, Democratic Convergence [CD] leaders Dr. Ruben Zamora and Juan Jose Martell charged that the authorities had committed electoral fraud. They reported that they had found 53 ballots marked with the CD flag in a trashcan on the outskirts of San Salvador.

Martell even said that the CD was not going to present the "evidence" to the CCE because they would not believe it.

Contradicting Martell's statements, the president of the CCE reported that the CD did present these ballots to the electoral organization on 18 March through its representative, Silvia Barrientos, as alleged proof of the presumed fraud.

In view of this situation, the CCE reviewed on 20 March—before the Departmental Electoral Board, representatives of the political parties and the contending coalitions, as well as the same OAS observers—the corresponding vote count certificate of Voting Table Board 1119 of Soyapango Municipality (which is where the discarded ballots were found in the trash can). Therefore, the CCE confirmed that the 53 ballots had been accounted for in favor of the CD.

According to the CCE officials, this action demonstrated the falseness of the accusations made by the CD. What really happened was that the ballots were removed after the vote count. The authorities are conducting investigations to find those responsible.

Meanwhile, Christian Democrat councilman Ricardo Perdomo also rejected accusations of fraud. He concluded that the results of the elections cannot be manipulated and "this has to be said with pride."

FMLN, Government To Meet Again in Apr

PA2203222491 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 1717 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Mexico City, 22 Mar (NOTIMEX)—Rebel sources reported today that the government and the guerrillas concluded one more stage of their Salvadoran peace negotiations yesterday without any substantial progress. They agreed to meet again in April.

Nidia Diaz, a member of the Political-Diplomatic Commission of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), added that the two parties discussed the Armed Forces, the constitutional reform, and the suspension of armed confrontations at the meeting, which started on Thursday morning and ended that evening.

The rebel proposal includes the dissolution of the Armed Forces and an end to the impunity of the military, as well as an end to conscription.

Diaz noted that the constitutional reform involves substantial aspects of the country's problems.

Salvadoran Justice Minister Oscar Santamaria, Mauricio Vargas, representative of the Armed Forces' Joint General Staff; Interior Minister Juan Martinez Varela; and David Escobar Galindo, a representative of the Presidency, participated in the meeting, which was held behind closed doors.

Commanders Jorge Shafick Handal, Joaquin Villalobos, Guadalupe Martinez, and Salvador Samayoa participated on behalf of the FMLN.

AGEMHA Lifts Strike; Situation Updated

PA2203134591 (Clandestine) Radio Farabundo Marti in Spanish to El Salvador 0000 GMT 20 Mar 91

[From the new "With All Our Flags" segment]

[Text] In a display of maturity, flexibility and willingness to continue negotiations with the management, more than 4,000 workers of AGEMHA [General Association of Treasury Ministry Employees] decided yesterday to lift their 11-day old strike. It was learned that the labor minister agreed to demilitarize the workplaces and to examine the legal status of workers arrested during the repressive police action on 15 March; 18 persons were arrested and more than 12 persons, including civilians, workers, and policemen, were injured.

The workers are demanding, among other things, a 400-colones wage increase, improved medical and working conditions, and a 100 percent pay bonus for employees with over 30 years of service. AGEMHA has made it clear that the strike will intensify should the management attempt to promote talks with promises and demagoguery.

Andes 21 June [21 June National Association of Salvadoran Teachers] staged a nationwide 8-hour strike on 19 March in support of AGEMHA. Its list of demands included the immediate release of the 18 AGEMHA workers arrested during the strike.

Moreover, UNTS [National Union of Salvadoran Workers] announced that it may extend its strike. The UNTS announced that a march will take place on 20 March in support of AGEMHA and the detained workers. The UNTS, composed of 60 labor organizations, warned the Arena [Nationalist Republican Alliance] government that if the AGEMHA workers' demands are not met, the struggle will continue.

Meanwhile, Armando Salazar, president of the Codefam [Marianela Garcia Villa Committee of Relatives of Murdered and Missing People and for the Release of Political Prisoners], is sponsoring a demonstration on 20 March to demand the demilitarization of the workplaces. He noted that they support AGEMHA's list of demands.

Asserting that the workers are exercising their legal right to continue to struggle Salazar said:

[Begin Salazar recording] This clearly indicates that the treasury minister and the government have shunned negotiations and have tried to resolve the workers' demands through repression. [end recording]

Salazar stressed that Codefam will support the AGEMHA workers even in the worst circumstances. So long as there are no deep changes in El Salvador that can guarantee the lives and democratic rights of the people, the working class struggle continues to be valid. Salvadoran people, the FMLN proposal reflects your wish to live in peace and to have the right to organize and to mobilize without the threat of militarization. Let us continue waging the battle until we achieve such rights.

Employees Released From Jail

PA2303220891 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 0300 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] The civil courts at the Isidro Menendez police station and in Soyapango have issued new orders for the release of Treasury Ministry employees. According to confirmed reports, the judge at the court of public pleas in Soyapango released three AGEMHA [General Association of Treasury Ministry Employees] labor leaders who were arrested last week in San Bartolo, where workers had staged riots. [words indistinct]

[Begin recording of unidentified male] They were charged with abandoning their government jobs, classified under the [words indistinct] Article 436 of the penal code, [words indistinct], and thay have been fined 1,000 colones.

The prisoners are (Nelson Cosio Mondragon), Oscar Bonilla Segovia, and (Ingmar Rolando Reyes Flores). [Words indistinct] as soon as they are released. [end recording]

At the Isidro Menendez court, the situation was a little different because [words indistinct] released two individuals identified as Jose Ignacio Velazco and (Jesus Tamayo Hernandez), who were charged with abusing the right to work and with the misuse of supplies meant exclusively for their jobs. [Words indistinct] that neither of the two defendants work at the Treasury Ministry, and on the day of the arrests, they happened to be in the area.

After the period established by the law had expired, of a total of 17 AGEMHA labor union members captured by the police and then prosecuted, 15 of them were released. Only two of them will remain in prison until a legal proxy looks into their situation and gains their release. This will be facilitated by the law because the crimes they have been prosecuted for do not require imprisonment.

PDC Denies Bombing, Questions Vote Results

PA2503150491 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 0300 GMT 23 Mar 91

[Text] The Christian Democratic Party [PDC] has denied any responsibility in the dynamite attack on Arena [Nationalist Republican Alliance] headquarters in La Libertad Department. The PDC also rejected the Central Electoral Council's [CCE] report on the vote count in La Libertad Department.

In a news conference, the PDC denied the charges made by Arena representatives who have said the PDC is to blame for the bomb set off at Arena headquarters in La Libertad Department. PDC leader Dr. Eduardo Colindres warned that if these accusations continue, his party will be forced to turn to the courts.

[Begin Colindres recording] That has never been the way we act. We will never act in such a way. We have never set off bombs, and we have never had death squads. Those are the acts of other parties and organizations. The PDC categorically rejects such accusations. Mr. [name indistinct] must back his accusations. I think it is very dangerous to make such charges because they only promote and foment violence. [end recording]

PDC leader Maria Elena Villalta said that those making the charges only seek to create a smoke screen in view of the irregularities in the vote count in La Libertad. She added that the PDC is not satisfied with the results there.

[Begin Villalta recording] We do not feel defeated. Just the opposite, we know we won. We know the count has not been fair. There has been no final count in La Libertad Department and you can confirm that with CCE officials. We know that we legally won the elections not only in La Libertad municipality but in five other municipalities in the department. We have the right, therefore, to a second deputy, but that seat is now being announced for them [Arena] with the fraud we are all seeing. [end recording]

The PDC leaders ruled out filing a challenge against the vote results in La Libertad because, they said, it would be useless since the Supreme Court is controlled by the ruling Arena.

UNTS Member Reportedly Dies at Hands of Police

PA2203145291 (Clandestine) Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador 0000 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] The National Union of Salvadoran Workers [UNTS] today reported the death of UNTS member Salvador Carlos Bizcarra, who worked at the Treasury Ministry.

A UNTS source said that Bizcarra was one of 17 people detained by the riot police on Monday when policemen and employees of the Treasury Ministry staged disturbances in front of the ministry building. According to the reports, Bizcarra died as the result of the torture inflicted on him in prison.

The union source said that the UNTS is considering measures to be taken in the country in connection with this loathsome action.

This is just another unjust action perpetrated by the antidemocratic Armed Forces. This time, another union member was murdered by the antiriot dogs of the national police.

National Combat Roundup for 22-23 Mar Noted

PA2503163691

[Editorial report] (Clandestine) Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador at 0000 GMT on 22 Mar carries five minutes of battle reports. The first report from the Francisco Sanchez Southeastern Front says that "as a result of a maneuver carried out by the National Army for Democracy near Estanzuela, Usulutan Department, against a company of the 15 September Battalion near Estanzuela, Usulutan Department, two soldiers were killed, including one lieutenant, and 12 others were wounded, including a radio operator." The report adds that "the following war materiel was seized: two G- 3 rifles, three hand grenades, knapsacks, one PRC-77 communications radio," and notes that one guerrilla was slightly wounded.

Another report says that at "0800 on 21 March, snipers of the National Army for Democracy inflicted two casualties on the Cacahuatique Battalion near El Pajarito Hill, El Rosario Jurisdiction, Morazan Department."

The station then reports several propaganda activities carried out in Chalatenango, Usulutan, and San Vicente Departments.

(Clandestine) Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador at 0000 GMT on 23 March carries seven minutes of battle reports. The first report mentions an attack with artillery and rifle fire on a Treasury Police position in El Refugio, La Palma Jurisdiction, Chalatenango Department in the early hours of 22 March, "during which one member of that repressive force was wounded."

Another report claims "two more casualties, including one corporal of the Cobra Battalion" as a result of mines placed against two companies of Military Detachment No. 1 and the 4th Infantry Brigade near Cerro Pina del Norte, Chalatenango Department.

The station then reports that four casualties were inflicted on the Atonal and Lempa Battalions during clashes on 21 and 22 March in San Francisco Javier and San Agustin, as a result of a military operation that began on 20 March. The station announcer then "regrets the heroic fall of companero Miguel."

The next report says that "the National Army for Democracy inflicted two casualties, including one radio operator, on troops of the antidemocratic Armed Forces during a clash at 0930 on the coastal highway from San Francisco Javier and Jiquilisco, Usulutan Department."

Another report says that "at 1445 on 22 March, snipers of the National Army for Democracy inflicted one casualty on the 1st Infantry Brigade near the Santa Cruz Canton, San Jose Guayabal Jurisdiction, Chalatenango Department."

The station announcer then reads a report from the Francisco Sanchez Southeastern Front which says that "on 22 March, troops of the 6th Infantry Brigade, in desperation after sustaining four casualties, began an indiscriminate attack with 105-mm mortars against densely populated areas," adding that so far the number of victims is unknown.

The last battle report says that "on 21 March, forces of the National Army for Democracy clashed with forces of the Navy and of the 3d Company of the Infantes de

Marina Battalion, who entered into areas under our control." The report adds that "the clashes took place at 0800 and 1500 in Concepcion Batres and Jucuaran, Usulutan Department," adding that "during the clashes the enemy attacked civilian towns with 60-mm mortars, wounding one civilian and sowing terror among the civilian population."

Guatemala

Labor Union Leaders Reported Unhurt in Attack

PA2203231791 Guatemala City Teleonce Television in Spanish 0400 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Labor Union leaders from the Culture and Sports Ministry escaped injury in a shooting attack perpetrated by individuals driving a white vehicle on 20 March. Both labor leaders were driving an official vehicle and said that they had received anonymous death threats hours earlier.

The incident was reported by the secretary general of the aforementioned labor union, Cesar Franco, and by one of the labor leaders who was attacked, Horacio Ramirez Juarez.

[Begin recording] [Franco] The secretaries of press, propaganda, and organization from the labor union were the target of an attack in zone No. 7 at approximately 2330. The vehicle in which they were traveling was shot at by unidentified individuals and, miraculously, no one lost their life, but this was not all. Today at approximately 0200, according to a report from relatives of fellow labor union leader Aura Violeta Flores, heavily armed men drove to her house at El Amparo neighborhood and dragged her out in her nightgown and took her to an unknown location. We reported this to the proper authorities this morning, but we are very concerned because at morgue in zone No. 13 has reported that there is a body that fits the description of this fellow labor union leader.

[Ramirez] At approximately 2250 or 2245, on 2d Avenue and 7th Street in zone No.7, where there is a water tank, a white car with tinted glass approached us and shot at us several times. When I realized what was going on, I stepped on the pedal and took a turn. The white car drove off. The three bullets that hit our vehicle came from a high-caliber weapon. Thank God no one was injured. We immediately notified the authorities. We still have to file charges at the police station. [end recording]

Violence Claims 12 Victims in 24-Hour Period

PA2503215291 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1606 GMT 25 Mar 91

[Text] Guatemala City, 25 Mar (ACAN-EFE)—Official sources reported today that 12 persons died and 24 were wounded in the last 24 hours during one of the most violent days registered in Guatemala.

The Army reported that Military Commissioner Teodoro Quinonez was murdered by the rebels in La Laguna, San Diego, in northern Peten Department. The victim was seized by the rebels who "virtually murdered him in front of his home," according to the military report.

Meanwhile, the National Police has reported that unidentified men launched a fragmentation grenade against a home in Nebaj, in northwestern Quiche Department, in which peasant Catarina Lopez was killed and her husband seriously injured.

Another 10 people, among them a student, were killed in the capital and in the countryside, according to the authorities.

Meanwhile, the Office of the Guatemalan Human Rights Attorney General will demand the arrest of 14 civilian self-defense patrols [PAC] members by the Army. These PAC members are accused of murdering three peasants in the northwestern Quiche Department, according to statements made today by Deputy Human Rights Attorney General Cesar Alvarez.

The government official said that this week he will visit Colonel Hector Santizo, military commander in Quiche, and will ask for his cooperation in capturing the PAC members against whom a court issued arrest warrants for the murders perpetrated last month in Chinima.

The United States has accused the PAC, together with the security forces, of being the main human rights violator in Guatemala.

Honduras

Government, IMF Delegation Sign Agreement

PA2603033491 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 2144 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Tegucigalpa, 22 Mar, (ACAN-EFE)—The Honduran Government and the IMF signed today a bilateral "stand by" agreement which gives Honduras access to a $30.5 million dollar credit.

The agreement reached between an IMF delegation and important members of the economic cabinet finalizes three months of bilateral negotiations and will be in force until 31 December 1991.

An official communique says that the adjustment promoted by President Callejas was supported by the IMF despite the fact that the country had not achieved certain fiscal goals in 1990.

According to the official information, "the technical mission concluded that the failure cannot be attributed to deficiencies in the adjustment program, but to external factors such as floods in the northern region, the banana strike, and the war in the Persian Gulf."

The communique does not specify the demands that were requested by the IMF and accepted by the Honduran authorities to stabilize bilateral ties.

Human Rights Group Calls Callejas 'Two-Faced'

PA2603135191 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1712 GMT 23 Mar 91

[Text] Madrid, 23 March (EFE)—Ramon Custodio, president of the Honduran Human Rights Defense Committee [CODEH], today accused Honduran President Rafael Callejas of presenting himself as a defender of human rights and at the same time being part of the "system of violations."

In statements published by the Spanish daily EL INDEPENDIENTE, Custodio stated that the human rights conditions in Honduras have not changed since "the repression began in 1981," although its "models" have varied since then. "If before there were missing people, now there are executions and tortures," Custodio said.

To the president of CODEH, in Honduras "the individual continues to be defenseless against the state" and repression is "very severe."

Custodio pointed out that last year the committee he presides over registered five political murders, 85 deaths due to abuse of authority by the security forces, 96 proven cases of torture, and more than 500 illegal arrests.

According to Custodio, President Rafael Callejas is "very clever" when he talks about human rights issues, but "he is either incapable of punishing the guilty or is two-faced, portraying himself as a defender of human rights, while at the same time he is part of the system of violations."

To Custodio the reason why the Callejas government enjoys such international credibility is not due to moral considerations, but economic ones. He has implemented strict monetary measures that are more rigid that those advised by the IMF, and therefore he is considered "exemplary."

The president of CODEH concluded by saying that "what should have been achieved with the Esquipulas II agreements—peace in Central America—is not a reality."

* CNTC Organizes Seizures of Farmlands

91CA0080B Tegucigalpa LA TRIBUNA in Spanish 19 Feb 91 p 14

[Text] The National Agrarian Institute [INA] will apply for the use of military force to clear out groups associated with the National Central Organization of Rural Workers [CNTC] which on 18 February occupied land at several places in the Departments of Cortes and Yoro.

This information was confirmed by an INA source in San Pedro Sula after Victor Leva, the institute's regional director, held an urgent meeting for more than three hours with a number of its agrarian organizers.

Meanwhile, in the ranks of the INA several farm labor leaders were looking for a way of increasing the pressure which it has exercised, rather than engaging in a dialogue, since the CNTC threatened and on 18 February carried out a wave of simultaneous occupations of the land in various directions in the Departments of Cortes and Yoro.

CNTC leaders, accused of being "revolutionary rebels," said that they could not withstand pressure for action from their rank and file members, at a time when the Regional Directorate of the INA was establishing contact with the public security forces to remove the squatters.

In the view of those CNTC leaders the most serious problem in connection with the wave of land occupations is the complaint of native American groups which accuse the CNTC of invading their land in Morazan and Yoro. As a result of these actions a shootout recently took place which resulted in a number of dead and wounded.

The CNTC leadership blamed the INA for those incidents because it reportedly authorized and later supported the land seizures, in violation of the rights of the native Americans.

Nevertheless, the CNTC also accused Danilo Velasquez, a landowner, of having incited the native Americans to claim that they have property rights. In the view of the farm workers this action could degenerate into another armed clash.

Nicaragua

Law Passes on Private Banks; Comptroller Named

PA2403011891 Managua BARRICADA in Spanish 22 Mar 91 pp 1, 12

[Text] After two days of intensive debates and lobbying, the law creating the Superintendency of Financial Institutions was approved, thus permitting the operation of private banks in the country.

Deputies authorized the creation of cooperative banks—one of the most controversial aspects of the law—and a regulation compelling the government to prepare and implement a plan to strengthen, capitalize, and deliver liquid funds to state banks so that they can compete with private banks.

The plan should be implemented within a period of 90 days following the publication of the law.

The plan for the capitalization of the National Financial System (state banks) was approved based on a joint motion presented by leaders of various political parties represented in the Assembly.

New private banks will be allowed to begin operating with a minimum capital of 10 million gold cordobas, equivalent to $2 million.

On another subject, amid harsh criticisms and despite the opposition of five National Opposition Union parties, Guillermo Putoy Angulo was elected new comptroller general by a majority of votes. He replaced Emilio Baltodano Pallais.

Putoy Angulo was elected amid serious doubts about his qualifications to occupy that high position. Miriam Arguello, Eli Altamirano, and Julia Mena were the deputies who were more strongly opposed to Putoy's appointment. For several decades, Putoy was an employee and manager of the Alfredo Pellas family.

Altamirano told the plenum that he disagreed with Putoy Angulo's appointment because he is president of the Social Democratic Party, and because he is "very close to the executive branch and has bragged about enjoying the benefits of power." He asked the Assembly to elect a candidate "who will not cause so much ill-feelings"

Meanwhile, Deputy Julia Mena noted the close ties between Putoy Angulo and Legislative Assembly President Alfredo Cesar. She said that his appointment would increase inter-family ties in the government and noted that Cesar is married to the general treasurer and is brother-in-law of "prime minister" Antonio Lacayo.

Despite the strong opposition of the APC [Conservative Popular Alliance], PLI [Independent Liberal Party], PIAC [Party for Integration of Central America, and factions of the PDC [National Democratic Confidence Party] and PAN [National Action Party], Putoy Angulo was elected with the favorable votes of the majority of the Sandinist deputies, although many of them abstained from voting.

The other two names on the list of candidates proposed by the president of the Republic—Luis Alberto Correa Hernandez and Juan Gutierrez Herrera—received very few votes: Gutierrez 10 and Correa none.

At the end of the afternoon, after a labor conflict that paralyzed the regular session was resolved, Putoy Angulo was sworn in as new comptroller general of the Republic.

Agreements Signed With United Kingdom, Italy

PA2203180191 Managua BARRICADA in Spanish 20 Mar 91 p 5

[Text] Nicaragua signed various agreements with European countries and multilateral organizations this week that will result in financial aid for projects, as well as donations of equipment and food.

An agreement signed with the Commonwealth Development Corporation from the UK will make $1 million available for imports for housing projects in the framework of Social Investment Fund (FISE) programs.

The houses will be built in Managua, Rio San Juan, and the Nicaraguan Atlantic coastal region.

During the San Jose VII meeting, the EEC took advantage of the opportunity to implement agreements signed in San Pedro Sula and Dublin regarding the promotion of exports from Nicaragua and Honduras.

The agreements make reference to the availability of 32 million ECU's [European currency units]—the monetary unit of the EEC—equivalent to $40 million, which will be equally distributed between both Central American countries.

The funds will be channeled through the Central American Bank of Economic Integration (BCIE), a regional institution, which donated $195,000 on Monday for the strengthening of the Housing Bank of Nicaragua (Bavinic) [Banco de la Vivienda de Nicaragua].

The Italian Government donated a gift of 51 tractors, two cranes, two earth movers, an ambulance, 1,649 tons of wheat, and 2,516 tons of soybean oil, a package worth $3 million.

President Violeta Chamorro was present during the signing of the agreements and delivery of the donations. On behalf of the Nicaraguan people and government, she thanked the gesture of solidarity from the friendly countries and institutions that believe Nicaragua can come out ahead, she said.

Rectors Comment on Meeting With Antonio Lacayo

PA2403023991 Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish 1232 GMT 23 Mar 91

[Passages within quotation marks are recorded]

[Text] Tensions between university rectors and the government have increased because of changes in the budget. The members of the National Council of Universities reacted angrily following their meeting with Presidency Minister Antonio Lacayo, who attacked them verbally, they claimed in a news conference. The rectors want to negotiate a restructuring of the university budget to cover salaries and operational costs, which they claim have increased by 4.1 percent and not by 2.65 as the government says. Let us listen to the reactions from the university rectors after their meeting with Antonio Lacayo. The first to speak is Alejandro Serrano Caldera, rector of the UNAN [National Autonomous University of Nicaragua] in Managua.

[Serrano] "We told him: Mr. Presidency Minister, we did not come here to be scolded by you. We demand respect. We have come to hold a dialogue, not to listen to your [words indistinct] and you also protested and you have been saying things, but of course [words indistinct]. He is a person that I used to hold in the highest personal esteem. We have even held talks. I had the impression that he was a gentleman and was even tolerant in conversations; however, the person I had in front of me

was nothing like the person I had known. When the budget discussions began, he became extremely violent. The National Council of Universities is not willing to accept this [words indistinct]."

Father Cesar Jerez, rector of Central American University [UCA] also commented on the talks held with Presidency Minister Antonio Lacayo.

[Jerez] "It is of course regrettable. I could not imagine that in talks held between ministers and university rectors, something like this could take place. [words indistinct] because time and time again they asked us the same things. We said, well, we released it in writing, we said it on television, and we said it over the radio; however, the questions continued. The third [as heard] thing I want to say is that it was a disorderly meeting. I do not know how dialogues with other groups involved in conflict in the country have taken place, but frankly speaking with so much disorder, I do not think we can make progress."

The National Council of Universities also spoke against the government's accusations of alleged embezzlement of funds. Rector Andres Mejia from the National Agrarian University also participated in the conference.

[Mejia] "The possibility of an alleged embezzlement by the university authorities has often been mentioned. At the end of the conference with the government [words indistinct] if the universities were involved in the embezzlement of funds and if the university authorities were manipulating the students [words indistinct] to react against the government."

You have listened to the statements of three university rectors: Alejandro Serrano from the UNAN in Managua; Fr. Cesar Jerez from the UCA; and Andres Mejia from the National Agrarian University.

Panama

Endara's Wife Says PDC 'Sowing Destabilization'

PA2203001791 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 20 Mar 91 p 1A

[By the Editorial Staff]

[Text] Yesterday First Lady Ana Mae Diaz leveled a veiled accusation against First Vice President Ricardo Arias Calderon. She said that the first vice president is planning a coup d'etat against her husband, President Guillermo Endara Galimany.

"It is time that we begin to look at what is really happening here. It is not that we think they [not further identified] are working against the president. It is obvious that it is the Christian Democrats," Endara's wife said.

"I did not want to say this. I know this will create problems, but the Panamanian people must learn the truth, because I see the Christian Democrats attacking my husband every day, but they do not attack Ricardo Arias Calderon," she said.

Ana Mae Diaz made the statements yesterday on Radio Soberana Civilista, during the program by commentator "Bucho Pinzon." She asked the Arnulfistas to accompany her to the Legislative Assembly.

The Credentials Commission of the Legislative Assembly studied a charge leveled against Endara for the alleged crime of "discrediting the state's international image." This alleged crime occurred when he requested U.S. military aid to quell a police rebellion last December.

The first lady said that the Legislative Assembly, 50 percent of which is made up of Christian Democratic Party [PDC] legislators, does not attack the first vice president of the country, but she said: "I am now attacking Ricardo Aris Calderon because he is the one who is responsible, he is the one to blame for everything that is happening," she added.

According to the first lady, the reason for the PDC's "destabilizing" attempt is because they know that they are not going anywhere in 1994. "Even their party may disappear," which is why they "have to deal an illegal blow to the president," Ana Mae Diaz insisted.

She added that the PDC must take care of the crime first because citizens are being robbed and killed all the time. In the same vein, she asked: "Who is the government and justice mister? Why does he not make the streets safe?"

"He (Arias Calderon) goes against democratic and Christian principles. All Christian Democrats are against democracy. They are sowing destabilization in the country," Ana Mae reiterated.

"They had better put on their pants, because the president is going to put his on. I am ready to be with him always and am willing to risk my blood," the first lady said on the radio station.

In an impromptu statement before hundreds of supporters, the president said that he would remain in his post until the end of his constitutional term, clearly alluding to the alleged PDC attempts to oust him from power.

"The only way I will leave the presidency is in wooden pajamas and I will defend my term with fire and blood," the president said firmly.

Endara referred to the charge which was studied and rejected for lack of evidence by the credentials commission of the Legislative Assembly. Ana Mae and a group of Arnulfistas went to the Assembly to listen to the debate.

After the charges were rejected, the Arnulfistas marched to the Presidency where they were received by Endara,

who warned that there will be bloodshed if they attempt to oust him or to impeach him.

He recalled that he is the pupil of the late and three-time President Arnulfo Arias Madrid. He recalled that on 10 May 1951 there had been bloodshed when they tried to overthrow him. "History will repeat itself if they attempt to do something similar," he reiterated.

According to Endara, he will defend his Arnulfista Party and will win the "final victory over his opponents."

For the president his party is the strongest one and will continue to be the strongest because it fights for the people.

Regarding his wife's remarks, he said that like any other citizen who struggled for the democracy that prevails today, she is entitled to give an opinion.

Legislator Carlos Arellano Lennox, leader of the PDC wing in the Assembly, denied that his party is planning a coup against Endara. He described the media reports as a "Disneyworld-type fantasy." "We are entities that uphold the state of law and the day any PDC leader reaches a post such as the Presidency, it will be by popular vote," Lennox said. He recalled that it was the PDC that went into the streets in December to defend Endara against an attempted coup by policemen headed by retired Colonel Eduardo Herrera.

Asked about the possibility that these coup rumors may have stemmed from some government sector to harm the PDC image, Lennox said that all majority parties in the world must always pay the price with attacks, because they are the target of other parties who are losing popularity.

Reaction to Statements

PA2203025391

[Editorial report] Panama City newspapers on 20 March carry numerous reports on reactions to statements made by First Lady Ana Mae Diaz de Endara, and on alleged splits within the ruling alliance.

Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish on 20 March on page 1A carries the unattributed 200-word "As of Today" column which says that since the Civic Democratic Opposition Alliance (ADOC) began ruling the country, splits within the coalition have become evident because of rivalries and infighting for political appointments. The president and vice presidents paid little importance to the differences, attributing them to the "climate of democracy," but now it is impossible to deny that the alliance is not finished. The columnist ends by saying that the president should reshuffle his cabinet to make the administration more efficient.

The same newspaper on page 26A carries a 600-word column by LA PRENSA editor Roberto Eisenmann Jr., who states it is very clear that the government alliance does not work and has failed. He adds that the president is not to blame for the situation because of special circumstances in which he came to power. He says that Panama does not have a president, but instead it has a troika, in which the two vice presidents are ruling each other out because they are contending for the presidency. Eisenmann ends by saying that the Chrisitan Democratic Party's (PDC) dilemma is such that if it leaves the government coalition and the government runs smoothly, it will become evident that the party was to blame for obstructing the government's work, but if all goes wrong, Panamanians will not forget that Ricardo Arias Calderon is the vice president and the PDC has a majority in the Legislative Assembly and so they are to blame for the mess.

Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish on 20 March on page A4 carries a 500-word editorial which says that the current government is in the middle of a period of disillusionment, disappointments, blunders, and disorientation exactly 15 months after coming to power. The editorial adds that the government's dubious origin, amid a bloody U.S. invasion, has not given the nation peace of mind. It states that no one doubts the current government won by a landslide, but its own members are destroying it. In addition, the government has shown indecision in facing the most serious problems in the country. Basic problems such as unemployment, health care, education, and housing have not been dealt with.

Panama City EL DIARIO INDEPENDIENTE in Spanish on 20 March on page 22 carries a 1,800-word report by Lionel Blaisdell on statements made by First Lady Ana Mae Endara, who urged Panamanians and Arnulfists to show support for the president because "it is time to say there is a plot against the president; it is clear that members of the PDC are behind it." She said her husband is the only one being attacked, adding "why do they not attack Government and Justice Minister Ricardo Arias Calderon, who is not doing his job and not providing protection on the streets?"

The report adds that Hector Penalba, secretary general of the Arnulfist Party, condemned how the credentials commission of the Legislative Assembly, led by PDC Legislator Raul Ossa "tried to make President Guillermo Endara stand trial and then tried to strip him of the presidency." Arnulfist legislator Marcos Alarcon told Alonzo Pinzon, from Radio Soberana Civilista, that the PDC is trying to create the conditions for the president to resign.

The report ends with statements made by opposition Democratic Revolutionary Party legislator Gerardo Gonzalez, who said the case against Endara should have never been opened because both vice presidents, the members of the cabinet, and most legislators went to support the president during the 5 December coup attempt staged by Eduardo Herrera.

Finally, the report includes statements made by President Endara, who said he is a true Arnulfist, and as such,

he will stay until the end. "All Arnulfists, the richest and the poorest, will stand united to strengthen democracy," Endara said.

Refusal To Recant Remarks

PA2303154891 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 21 Mar 91 p 1-A

[Text] Ana Mae Diaz, wife of President Guillermo Endara, has reaffirmed the accusations she has leveled against the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) to the effect that it is planning a "coup d'etat," even though her remarks have been described as "reckless and dangerous."

"I will make no further statements, but I will not recant," stressed the first lady, who was with the president when reporters besieged her at the presidential palace. The first lady's remarks prompted a spontaneous outburst of laughter from President Endara and Presidency employees.

Endara, who enjoyed his wife's answer, insisted that "we are facing a historic situation and we must, as Dr. Arnulfo Arias Madrid [the late Panamenista Party leader] said, establish a great union. I—and Dr. Arias believed this—cannot and should not govern alone."

According to Endara, there is no evidence that the PDC is planning a coup against him; he explained that he has never had "serious problems" with PDC President Ricardo Arias Calderon, but he has had them with individuals who have "strayed" from the party and are not aware of what constitutes an alliance.

The accusations that Ana Mae leveled against the PDC and its foremost leader have prompted angry reactions within PDC ranks, as party members vehemently defended their integrity and fervor for the democracy that Panama needs.

Legislator Gloria Moreno de Lopez said that "the situation has gone too far," and she described Ana Mae's remarks as "harsh and reckless," adding that they will force the presidents of the four parties in the ruling alliance to call an urgent meeting to decide whether to reinforce the coalition or dismantle it.

[Legislator] Mery Alfaro de Villageliu, to the contrary, expressed resolve to struggle to maintain the alliance and make the country succeed, "but without crudity," which is a form of "rudeness" toward the people.

[Panama City] Mayor Guillermo Cochez pointed out that it a shame that certain people are forgetting the purpose of the struggle, Panama's democratic consolidation.

He said: If this process is torn asunder by senseless internal struggles that have no raison d'etre, where will that lead the country?

Meanwhile, Olmedo Guillen, president of the National Council of Representatives, requested that there be no further remarks concerning "coups d'etat," because they only create chaos in the country.

Guillen said that disputes that are taking place among government sectors are hindering the development of a coherent work policy.

He announced that on 20 March he and the presidents of the provincial councils met with Endara to express their concerns over the latest political events.

During the meeting, Guillen added, the representatives proposed to the president that a congress of groups active in the country be held on 19 May to discuss the problems of the poor and to find solutions for them.

The PDC, meanwhile, on 20 March issued a communique to demand respect for Arias Calderon's dignity and integrity, and to strongly reject the irresponsible attitudes, actions, and remarks adopted against the PDC and its leaders.

The PDC communique states that the accusations, which are "unfounded and disrespectful, are an attack on social peace because of their nature and seriousness."

The resolution adds that the accusations contradict the government's efforts in favor of democracy, reconstruction, and reconciliation.

The Christian Democrats resolved to continue their party's firm pledge to consolidate social peace and reconciliation among Panamanians, and they reaffirmed that their party will uphold principles favorable to everyone and not only to political groups.

Communique Refutes Charges Against Arias Calderon

PA2503215391 Panama City EL SIGLO in Spanish 22 Mar 91 p 12

[Communique issued by the Christian Democratic Party in Panama City on 20 March, 1991]

[Text] WHEREAS:

1. In the last few days, prominent members of the Arnulfist Party (in formation) have made bold and irresponsible accusations in the media against the PDC [Christian Democratic Party] and its president, Dr. Ricardo Arias Calderon, first vice president of the Republic and minister of government and justice;

2. That due to their nature and seriousness, these unfounded and disrespectful accusations are aimed at the social peace;

3. That said accusations also undermine the government's efforts in favor of democracy, reconstruction, and reconciliation;

4. That the political record and behavior of the PDC during its 30-year struggle for democracy and against the

dictatorship represent the strongest historical proof for denying the persistent and audacious accusations against the party and its leaders;

5. That the irresponsible and demagogic behavior of those who accuse the PDC and its leaders is intended to discredit the legality of what was done at the Legislative Assembly and it confuses the public;

RESOLVES:

1. To demand respect for the dignity and integrity of Dr. Ricardo Arias Calderon, first vice president of the Republic, minister of government and justice, and president of the PDC;

2. To state the strong commitment that the PDC has to the consolidation of social peace and reconciliation of the Panamanians;

3. To reaffirm before the public that, in its government effort, the PDC maintains its principles in favor of well being for all and not of political sects;

4. To strongly reject the irresponsible and offensive attitudes, actions, and statements against the PDC and all its officials;

5. To support the responsible and earnest actions of the Credentials Commission of the Legislative Assembly in reinforcing the state of law for which we have struggled for, and that demands the consolidation of democracy.

Issued in Panama City on 20 March, 1991.
Signed by PDC member organizations:
Marta Jaramillo, national general secretary for the Christian Democratic Feminine Action (Afedec).
Carlos Medina, acting secretary general for the Christian Democratic Professionals.
Manuel Salvatierra, national formation secretary for the Christian Democratic Workers' Front.
Julio Aizprua, national secretary general for the Christian Democratic Youth.
Signatures affixed to original document.

PDC Waiting for Trial

PA2503221591 Panama City CRITICA LIBRE in Spanish 23 Mar 91 pp 13, 28

[Article by Roberto Cubilla]

[Text] Regarding the suit filed at the Attorney General's Office against Ricardo Arias Calderon, first vice president and government and justice minister, the Christian Democrats "will be waiting for the possibility of a trial against him with the law in our hands," said the party's Vice President Raul Ossa De la Cruz.

A suit has been filed at the Attorney General's Office against the two public officials for the alleged crime of "allowing the U.S. Army military police to patrol the national territory and to occupy national police stations."

The case, along with all the others at the Attorney General's office and in a state of law, must be studied by the appropriate authorities. There is the possibility that the government minister may be taken into preventive custody along with Vice Minister Ramon Lima while the investigation is being carried out, sources from the Attorney General's Office have reported.

With regard to that, Legislator Raul Ossa added that Ricardo Arias Calderon must face the accusation. He said that Attorney General Rogelio Cruz must take the proper steps as he is the authority in charge of the investigation.

Ossa pointed out that Ricardo Arias Calderon must respond to all summons made and answer all questions. "The attorney general will, in turn, determine the proper procedure."

Ossa added that he was sure that Arias Calderon will face the accusations and appear before the appropriate courts.

In conclusion, Ossa reiterated that the Christian Democrats maintain their position that justice must be served, even if it is a case against the president of that ruling political party.

Assembly Committee Supports Bilateral Patrolling

PA2203020391 Panama City EL SIGLO in Spanish 21 Mar 91 p 1

[Statement issued by the Foreign Relations Committee of the National Legislative Assembly in Panama City; date not given]

[Text] The Foreign Relations Committee of the National Legislative Assembly fully supports the signing of the "Arrangement [Arreglo] between the Republic of Panama and the United States of America regarding bilateral coast guard service operations between the United States and the National Maritime Service of the Government and Justice Ministry of the Republic of Panama."

This arrangement meets the country's needs of protecting our seas and coasts from the danger of international drug trafficking and other unlawful activities and of guaranteeing the enforcement of our laws in national territorial waters.

The current administrative arrangement is based on the country's existing legal system, an element that was basic in making this arrangement and implementing it.

Considering that it constitutes an urgently needed mechanism and that its text falls in line with our legal system, our committee must express its support for it.

Committee Chairman Legislator Olimpo Saenz
Committee Secretary Legislator Domingo Torres

Attorney on Alleged Corruption in Police, PTJ

PA2503151791 Panama City EL SIGLO in Spanish 23 Mar 91 p 10

[Text] Assistant District Attorney Carlos Herrera Moran has said that Panamanian drug cartels have developed an extensive network of corruption among government officials, a level of corruption which has reached the National Police, the Judicial Technical Police [PTJ], and even the Attorney General's Office. He added that those officials leak information to drug capos, which hinders the struggle against drug traffickers.

"I believe that individuals very close to those of us who are engaged in the struggle against drug trafficking are connected with drug trafficking bands," Herrera Moran said. He added that those individuals are very close to those "of us" whose obligation is to develop an anti-drug policy.

In addition, Herrera said that drug and narcotics trafficking in Panama has reached "very alarming and worrisome levels," noting the tragedy of minors linked to drug cases. "It is becoming more frequent to see children involved in the distribution, sale, and consumption of drugs," he said.

He added that "drug traffickers have many resources, especially economic resources, with which they can bribe many government officials," adding that "drug traffickers use the country's legal institutions to conceal the profit made through drug trafficking."

In that regard, Herrera clearly said that the narco-mafia uses private corporations and the local banking center to launder money acquired through drug trafficking and to hide their criminal activities. He announced that measures will be taken to investigate bank accounts suspected of being linked to drug trafficking.

"We are determined to severely suppress drug trafficking, to investigate banking activities related to that crime, and to prevent the leaking of information by employees who work with the authorities in charge of suppressing this crime.

"I am talking about the National Police, the PTJ, and why not say it, the Attorney General's Office," Herrera stressed.

"We are determined to act firmly against the criminal activity of narco-trafficking in Panama," Herrera concluded.

Polls Conducted Test National Mood, Views

Citizens Distrust Police

PA2403160991 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 23 Mar 91 p A1

[Article by Nubia Aparicio S.]

[Text] A poll conducted by Dichter and Neira pollsters indicates that the Panamanian people highly distrust the National Police and the Judicial Technical Police [PTJ]; the former is viewed as the Defense Force in civilian clothing.

Approximately 70.1 percent of those polled said they do not trust the National Police, and 75.9 percent indicated that they do not trust the PTJ.

This extent of distrust for the two police institutions has remained basically unchanged since August 1990, when LA PRENSA conducted the first poll on the subject.

In August, public distrust for the two entities stood at 75 percent. In November, 72.3 percent said that they distrusted the National Police and 75.8 percent indicated that they did not trust the PTJ.

The poll, conducted among 1,017 people over the age of 18, was conducted by the firm Dichter and Neira. The pollsters took into account the level of education of the participants and concluded that the more educated individuals have more distrust for the police. They drew the same conclusion after the two previous polls.

Despite the fact that approximately 142 policemen were forced to retire and Ebrahim Asvat became the first civilian in decades to be appointed National Police chief in September 1990, the poll results indicate that the public wants a more significant "purge" of the National Police and the PTJ.

In an apparent confirmation of this assertion, 54.3 percent of those polled believe that the National Police is the equivalent of the Defense Force with a civilian disguise. Only 31.8 percent think otherwise.

When we compare this poll with the previous ones, we see that this feeling has not changed and that the specter of the Defense Force continues to persist. The three polls indicate that between 54 and 56 percent share this view.

The poll also revealed that 49 percent believe that the civilian government has no control over the military. Approximately 38.5 percent believe the opposite. The number of those convinced that there is lack of civilian control over the military has increased since August.

Another issue addressed by the poll is whether or not the National Police fulfills its function of guarding and protecting the citizens. As many as 54.4 percent said yes and 31.8 percent said no. Compared with the results of the August and November 1990 polls, this represents an improvement.

The most recent poll also made it clear that a large percentage of the people believe that the National Police were not loyal to the government during the 4-5 December coup attempt. It shows that 55.9 percent think that the police were disloyal, 26.4 percent feel the police were loyal to the government.

The coup attempt occurred when approximately 100 persons commanded by former Colonel Eduardo Herrera took partial control of the Central Barracks, in Albrook. U.S. Army soldiers suppressed the coup attempt at the request of Panamanian authorities.

Herrera had escaped from the Naos prison where he was being held since 24 October, after having been accused by the Panamanian authorities of plotting against the state.

Police Director Asvat enjoys the approval of 13.2 percent of those polled; he was similarly evaluated in the November poll.

Support for Demilitarization

PA2603043891 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 25 Mar 91 p 1

[Report by Jose Quintero De Leon]

[Text] A poll conducted by the Dichter and Neira polling firm on 13 March reveals that 50 percent of the polled Panamanians said the Constitution should be amended to eliminate the army, while 32.8 percent do not believe it should be amended.

That view is more popular among women than men, and it is also more popular in Panama City than in the rest of the country. That view is stronger among the more educated sectors.

In answer to another question, 59.3 percent of those polled agreed that "the Panamanians want a demilitarized country, in other words, a country without an army," compared to 24.5 percent which rejected that view. This acceptance is more rooted among women and among residents of Panama City than in the rest of the country, although it is accepted in the same proportion among the more educated and the less educated.

Nevertheless, this shows a 16-point drop compared to the results of a November poll in which 75.9 percent were in favor of demilitarization.

On another issue, 56.7 percent of the Panamanians said that the Constitution should be amended, 31.1 percent said a new constitution should be drafted through a constituent assembly, and 12.2 percent said the current Constitution should continue in force.

In November, 59 percent of the polled Panamanians said the Constitution should be amended, while 29 percent rejected any changes. This shows that lately more Panamanians support constitutional change, although now they are divided between those who support amendments and those who want a constituent assembly.

It is very probable that the media campaign against the remnants of militarism has influenced the acceptance of the idea that the Constitution should be reformed and that demilitarization should be carried out by constitutionally eliminating the army.

To this is added the impact that the 4 and 5 December incidents had on citizens after former soldiers tried to stage a coup, arguing they were struggling for the solution of their grievances.

One must also include the effects of the appeal by former Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, who urged President Endara's government to act rapidly and prohibit an army through a constitutional reform so as to consolidate Panamanian democracy and follow the Costa Rican democracy's example.

On the issue of military bases, the poll reveals that the majority of the polled Panamanians feel that the permanence of the U.S. bases after the year 2000 is healthy for the country.

This was the belief of 58.4 percent of those polled; a 17-point jump from the figure obtained in November, when 41.6 percent were in favor and 43.5 percent were against the idea. In the March poll, 27.8 percent were against the idea.

It is possible that the presentation in the media of the distressing situation the Panamanian workers of the U.S. military bases will face with upcoming dismissals has influenced those polled; they feel sympathetic toward their fellow countrymen who have an uncertain future and who might increase the unemployment figures.

Popularity of Politicians Noted

PA2603031691 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 25 Mar 91 p 1

[Report by Jose Quintero De Leon]

[Text] The latest poll conducted by the Dichter and Neira firm on 13 March indicates that if presidential elections were held today, the majority of Panamanians would vote for Vice President Guillermo Ford of Molirena [Nationalist Liberal Republican Movement], and second place would be won by Dr. Ricardo Arias Calderon of the Christian Democratic Party [PDC].

The answer to the question posed to 1,017 Panamanian men and women throughout the country reveals that Vice President Ford continues to maintain the support of 19.6 percent of those polled, although this figure shows a marked loss of 15 points when compared to the results of a poll in November.

On that occasion, President Guillermo Endara obtained second place, followed by Dr. Carlos Ivan Zuniga of the People's Action Party [PAPO], and by Dr. Ricardo Arias Calderon in fourth place. This reflects the great deterioration of the image of the president, who in only three and a half months has dropped to seventh place. This has benefited his first vice president, Arias Calderon, who has gone from fourth place to second place.

The figures indicate that Arias Calderon maintained his previous figure of 5.3 percent and that Dr. Carlos Ivan Zuniga, of the nonregistered PAPO, held on to third

place with 2.9 percent, although he lost more than two points from the 5.5 percent he had obtained in the previous poll. Journalist Mayin Correa obtained 2.4 percent, also a higher rating than Endara.

President Endara's popularity dropped from 11.1 percent in November to 1.2 percent, the same percentage obtained by Panamanian singer Ruben Blades. Endara's percentage was lower than that of other hypothetical candidates such as Nicolas Ardito Barletta, who obtained 1.7 percent, and Arnulfo Arias Madrid's widow, Mrs. Mireya Moscoso de Gruber, who obtained 1.3 percent.

Nevertheless, this poll also reveals that the discontent and the growing lack of leadership seemed to influence the fact that 527 Panamanians who were polled, in other words, 51.8 percent of those polled, said they could not name a candidate who fulfills their expectations for president. This number nearly doubled from the figure of 29.2 percent in November.

In other political issues, the poll also shows that the Panamanians continue rejecting the view that the country needs new political parties; 53.6 percent do not want new parties. This rejection was higher than the 49.6 percent registered in the November poll.

All of the ruling alliance parties were viewed by those polled as having lost strength and popular support. As many as 75.1 percent of those polled viewed this loss of strength in the PDC, while 55.3 percent saw it in the Arnulfist Party, and a similar percent, 54.1 percent, saw it in the Authentic Liberal Party [PLA].

In this aspect, the party in the alliance which came out the best was Molirena, with 46.4 percent. This result shows a loss in the image of all the parties in the alliance, with the PDC showing the highest loss and Molirena the least.

The main reasons given by those polled for the loss of strength were, in the case of the PDC, false promises (24.4 percent), little credibility (10.1 percent), and hunger for power (9.0 percent).

In the case of Molirena, 27.2 percent said false promises, 10.8 percent said little credibility, and 8.7 percent said lack of confidence in the leaders. As for the PLA, 23.8 percent said false promises, 11.5 percent said little credibility, and 8.0 percent said bad administration and organization. Regarding the Arnulfist Party, 21.2 percent said false promises, 10.4 percent said little credibility, 7.2 percent said lack of confidence in the leaders, and a similar figure said bad administration and organization.

Another question was whether those polled viewed the results of the partial elections [in January 1991] as the voters' means to punish the government, the reemergence of Colina [National Liberation Coalition] or simple apathy because power was not at stake.

The poll showed that 56.4 percent believe the results were punishment for the government; 31.7 percent said they showed simple apathy; and 11.9 percent described them as a reemergence of the Colina parties.

The poll went even further. It wanted to know the Panamanian's political preference, especially which party attracts them or which one they sympathize with. Molirena is the one that elicits the highest percentage, with 16.6 percent. Nevertheless, its popularity has dropped because in November the figure was 24.2 percent.

It was followed by the PDC with 11.3 percent, dropping two points; the Arnulfist Party with 8.1 percent, dropping nearly two points; and in fourth place, the opposition PRD [Democratic Revolutionary Party] with 6.6 percent, rising from fifth place to fourth place. The PRD increased four points compared to the November poll, leaving the PLA behind with 2.0 percent. The PLA had obtained the fourth position in November.

Argentina

Alleged Campaign Against President Denounced

PY2303014891 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 2321 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Buenos Aires, 21 Mar (TELAM)—Alberto Lestelle, secretary for planning and coordination for drug abuse prevention and the anti-narcotics struggle, has charged foreign mass media, including the Spanish magazine CAMBIO 16 and the Mexican television network Eco, with carrying out an irresponsible campaign aimed at tarnishing President Carlos Menem's image. He added that he did not know the objective of this campaign.

Lestelle also charged that the former radical Civic Union administration paid no attention and carried out constant and systematic repression against investigations of drug trafficking in Argentina. He said that the Raul Alfonsin's administration refused to comment on the matter and that he had asked former officials the reasons for such a refusal.

In a news conference Lestelle reported that an organization that laundered money from the sale of drugs has been recently broken up in Argentina following an investigation conducted by Spanish Judge Baltazar Garzon. He said that the Yoma family is in no way involved with this organization.

Lestelle said that seven people were arrested during 20 raids ordered by Judge Maria Servini de Cubria. Five of the seven have already been released. The investigation revealed that former official Mario Caserta had been invited to participate in a business.

He did not clarify whether the business has to do with the money laundering or with the front or whether Caserta accepted or rejected the invitation. Caserta resigned as head of the Potable Water and Sanitation Federal Council, [Consejo Federal de Agua Potable y Saneamiento], Cofapys, at President Menem's request.

Concerning the CAMBIO 16 articles which sought to implicate Karim Yoma, Amira Yoma and her husband, and Caserta, Lestelle said that the fact that the articles mainly concentrate on the people allegedly involved in the affairs rather than on those primarily responsible reveals that this is an attempt to distort President Menem's image thereby to cause him a political harm.

Lestelle said: This is an irresponsible campaign carried out by CAMBIO 16 and other mass media. He added that Luis Marcelo Ojeda, correspondent of the Mexican Eco Television Network, has offensively tried to make the president appear to be the person primarily responsible for this problem. Lestelle referred to the showing of pictures of the president and Zulema Yoma while the magazine article was read.

Concerning the dismantled organization, Lestelle said that the activities of the organization were known for four months, and that it was disguised as a paging service. He also confirmed that Cuban Ramon Puentes, who was arrested in Uruguay, had a forged document in the name of Argentine citizen Jose Lemkno Patino.

Lestelle finally expressed the need to recognize the government's antidrug campaign. He added that a commission in charge of preventing money laundering and of investigating the entry of capital in the country was created. He also submitted suggestions to the banking and business enterprises.

Ministry Reports 'Normalcy' on Chilean Border

PY2603034091 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 0234 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Text] Buenos Aires, 25 Mar (TELAM)—The Argentine Foreign Ministry tonight denied that National Border Police posts had been established in the areas of Laguna del Desierto and Campos de Hielo, as has been reported by some Chilean media in citing political leaders in that country.

In a brief communique released tonight, the Foreign Ministry has stressed that there has been no change in the existing situation in these areas and that absolute normalcy prevails.

Foreign Minister di Tella Returns From Peru

PY2103174491 Buenos Aires Radio Nacional Network in Spanish 1600 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Foreign Minister Guido di Tella is currently visiting Jujuy Province upon his return from Peru. Di Tella said that he saw in Peru a high cholera mortality rate. He reiterated that there is little possibility that cholera will enter our country. He added: I do not believe this illness will spread to Argentina or to other countries.

Defense Minister on Wage Freeze, Increase

PY2503185191 Buenos Aires Radio Nacional Network in Spanish 1600 GMT 25 Mar 91

[Text] Defense Minister Antonio Erman Gonzalez has returned from Italy where he talked with Italian businessmen who are interested in the privatization of Argentine military companies. He added that this does not mean that Argentina precludes the idea of discussions with Germany and other countries.

Answering a question, Gonzalez said that if the wage freeze is general it must also affect the Armed Forces. He added that the Economy Ministry must be reminded that although members of the Armed Forces have received a lump sum on top of their basic salaries, their increase is less than that given to other public workers.

When asked if members of the Armed Forces will receive a wage increase, he said: We will discuss this with the economy minister and his team.

The minister added that he must decide by 30 April if the Jorge Newberry Metropolitan Airport will continue

to be under the control of the National Border Police or if it will be placed under the Argentine Air Force.

He also reported that, following its tour of duty in the Persian Gulf zone, the destroyer Admiral Brown sailed yesterday from Augusta [not further identified], where it had some repairs done for the voyage back to Argentina.

Chief of Joint Staff on Armed Forces Budget

PY2503204391 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 1620 GMT 24 Mar 91

[Text] Buenos Aires, 24 Mar (NA)—Admiral Emilio Osses, chief of the joint staff, said today that "the disturbing tendency to reduce the budget that has been assigned for defense and security compels us to optimize that which has been assigned to this sector."

He also supports the implementation of a system to reorganize "the role and structure of the Armed Forces, and the security and police organizations" in order "to prevent the overlapping of resources, expenditures, and efforts."

He added: "To do that it is necessary to reach a balance based on mutual support and clear responsibilities in every institution."

He also supports the use of resources obtained from the privatization of state companies of defense sector companies in the transformation of the Armed Forces that was announced by President Carlos Menem late in 1990.

Osses called on the civilian-private sector "to consider" the issue of national defense "their concern" because "it is a mistake to think that the responsibility for this issue falls solely upon the Armed Forces."

He said: "The basic principle of the national defense system is the people's will to defend the vital interests of the nation." He added that the current policy "mainly seeks to ensure territorial integrity and peace within the Republic."

Osses also believes that it is necessary "to accept the fact that the Armed Forces model which prevailed during a large part of this century has come to an end."

He said: "The Argentine military structure has in the last few years witnessed an unprecedented and substantial change."

He added: "This is why it is absolutely necessary to reactivate and strengthen the overall modernization of the military institutions within the framework of the state reform and the new international situation."

In this regard he said that during the last few years "effective steps were taken in the permanent search to improve and consolidate the military institutions."

He said: "We are aware of the anguish created by the current economic situation. In order to prevent greater government expenditure, genuine resources from the sale of goods and companies of the defense area will be used in the transformations."

He added: "Clear signs of the will to end this prolonged Argentine decadence are being perceived in important political and social sectors."

Minister Views Provinces' Critical Situation

PY2503215591 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 1325 GMT 24 Mar 91

[Text] Bahia Blanca, 24 Mar (TELAM)—Interior Minister Julio Mera Figueroa today said that the provinces are bankrupt. He added that nobody should ask the provinces for more money because they do not have it.

In remarks published today by the morning newspaper NUEVA PROVINCIA, Mera Figueroa said: The provinces are bankrupt because some of them were improperly administered, some were well-administered but too late, and some have structural defects that must be solved.

Mera Figueroa said: No one must ask for more money because we do not have it. The printing of money ended with the advent of the dollar exchange system plan. More revenues must be collected to overcome the situation. We will endure this difficult situation which will lead to the readjustment of real salaries and credits, and to a reactivation.

He said that he will tell the governors that to implement this plan they must collect more taxes, reduce the number of public employees, and suspend the construction of public works, and implement salary readjustments only if revenues and resources continue to increase.

He said that Peronism will win an important victory in the upcoming elections. He added: We have been deeply involved in causing a revolution in the country. Consequently, we did not become engaged in electoral politics while other sectors were, at the expense of the government.

Mera Figueroa said that there are rumors about corruption. It is clear that there is corruption. There is corruption among businessmen, officials who are bribed, employees who do not fulfill their duties, and employers' associations that do not comply with the laws. He added that corruption prevails throughout the country. He then pointed out the importance of having admitted this situation. We have not disguised it like other governments that said that everything was perfect.

There is an ongoing electoral campaign but we have not responded to it for the time being at the president's special request, but we will now begin so that this situation can quickly change.

Asked about the law on party slogans, Mera Figueroa said: The peculiarities of each province must be analyzed to establish the system to be implemented. I think this law is not appropriate for either Buenos Aires or Santa

Fe because they are huge provinces and there is the risk that the voter may not know for whom he is voting. I prefer unrestricted internal elections [internas abiertas] for a party that is supported by a movement, like Justicialism. Mera Figueroa concluded that it is important because the situation can become more dynamic, but we are still analyzing the situation.

Bolivia

COB Leaders: U.S. Envoy's Mission 'Nefarious'

PY2603144691 La Paz PRESENCIA in Spanish 21 Mar 91 p 6

[Text] Bolivian Labor Federation [COB] leaders have described as "nefarious" U.S. Ambassador to Bolivia Robert Gelbard's diplomatic mission, which is about to end. COB leaders Freddy Ontiveros and Carlos Camargo have pointed out that meddling in the government meant the decisions of that diplomatic mission had more power than the Council of Ministers.

COB leader Ontiveros said: "One of the most nefarious characters to participate in national politics at the diplomatic level is leaving. He has established a negative precedent for the actions of future diplomatic representatives in the country."

The two COB leaders regretted the fact that the diplomatic change will not represent any change in North American policy with respect to Third World countries, particularly Bolivia.

In the opinion of COB leader Carlos Camargo, the change is in keeping with the pressures the United States is exerting for the implementation of a policy favorable to its interests in our country. The express intention of Ambassador Gelbard to militarize the struggle against drug trafficking is one of the many interests the country of the north wants to impose. The militarization will just create an atmosphere of violence among Bolivians and will create conditions for an extremely serious political destabilization in our country, jeopardizing the democratic process.

For his part, COB leader Ontiveros pointed out that Ambassador Gelbard meddled in all national affairs. He reiterated that the government was unable to limit Gelbard's actions to the extent that the embassy's recommendations and decisions had much more power than those made by President Paz Zamora's cabinet.

This meddling by the North American diplomat caused the bipartite system to deteriorate significantly in the eyes of public opinion. "At this rate, we are headed toward an unprecedented political crisis that will have incalculable repercussions," Ontiveros warned.

Brazil

Teixeira Becomes New Infrastructure Minister

PY2503231491 Brasilia Domestic Service in Portuguese 2200 GMT 25 Mar 91

[By Luis Augusto Mendonca from Planalto Palace]

[Excerpts] Eduardo Teixeira, Petrobras [Brazilian Petroleum Corporation] chairman, is the new infrastructure minister. Teixeira replaces Ozires Silva, who announced his resignation to President Fernando Collor during a meeting at Planalto Palace. In his resignation letter, which he delivered to President Fernando Collor early this afternoon, Ozires Silva said that strictly personal reasons were behind his decision to resign.

In the 24-line letter, Ozires Silva expressed his thanks for the privilege of taking part in the direct government team and said that he will now be a member of President Fernando Collor's indirect team, which is made up of the millions of Brazilians who yearn for a new Brazil. President Collor told Ozires Silva in a personal letter that he accepted his resignation with regret.

A few minutes before 1700, presidential spokesman Claudio Humberto Rosa e Silva announced Ozires Silva's resignation and said that President Collor had already invited current Petrobras Chairman Eduardo Teixeira to head the Infrastructure Ministry. Standing next to Ozires Silva, the new minister announced that he intends to reduce ministry expenses even further. [passage omitted]

The government has not announced the date of the new minister's installation, but it will probably take place on 27 or 28 March.

* Benevides on Collor, Quercia, Collor Plan II

91SM0213A Sao Paulo FOLHA DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 11 Feb 91 p A5

[Interview with Senator Mauro Benevides, newly elected chairman of the National Congress, by Josias de Souza and Gilberto Dimenstein in Brasilia; date not given: "Congress Chairman Fears Social Conflicts"; first five paragraphs are FOLHA DE SAO PAULO introduction]

[Text] Brasilia—Mauro Benevides began his political career in 1954 in the former PSD [Democratic Social Party]. He was elected senator for the MDB [Brazilian Democratic Movement] in 1974. Defeated in his bid to become governor of Ceara in 1982, he returned to the Senate in 1986. He was deputy chairman of the Constituent Assembly.

In 1979, he authored the first constitutional amendment to restore the direct election of mayors of state capitals. Benevides' political activity has always been marked by internal coordination in his party and in Congress.

Concerned about the country's governability, the new chairman of the National Congress, Mauro Benevides (PMDB [Brazilian Democratic Movement Party], Ceara), has told FOLHA DE SAO PAULO in an interview that he advocates a multiparty political pact—an idea revived by Senator Fernando Henrique Cardoso (PSDB [Brazilian Social Democracy Party], Sao Paulo). According to him, governability will become a more serious problem if Collor Plan II fails, thus generating inevitable social conflicts.

He warns that the plan will be changed and that Congress will present alternative bills, saying that he considers the solution offered for workers' wages to be mistaken, since it will increase wage losses.

Benevides admits to supporting Governor Orestes Quercia's candidacy for president, asserting at the same time that he intends to cooperate with President Fernando Collor de Mello.

[FOLHA DE SAO PAULO] Are the worsening economic crisis and President Fernando Collor de Mello's political isolation threatening the country's governability? What is the role of Congress in that connection?

[Benevides] Congress will have to provide all the necessary conditions for ensuring the country's governability. In my election, it was argued that having a member of the PMDB as chairman of Congress might harm the country's governability, and the result was the idea of a bloc in support of the administration. That reflected a total lack of faith in the political maturity of the political class. Regardless of who the chairman of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate is, no obstacle to governability will be created.

[FOLHA DE SAO PAULO] What kind of relationship will there be with President Collor?

[Benevides] We are seeking an independent but harmonious relationship with President Collor. I am a PMDB man and therefore in the opposition, but that does not mean that I must be factious. Our intention is to cooperate, but without relinquishing congressional prerogatives such as the right to amend measures submitted by the administration.

[FOLHA DE SAO PAULO] How do you view Senator Fernando Henrique Cardoso's proposal for a political pact to help combat the crisis?

[Benevides] The political class cannot reject any kind of invitation which, inspired by noble motives and with no ulterior motives of a physiological nature, is aimed at producing a minimum of tranquillity. If the pact in question can be characterized in that way—as having that superior quality—then no one can fail to cooperate. But I repeat: none of this means that Congress is going to lose, in practice, its prerogative of suggesting, overseeing, and presenting amendments.

[FOLHA DE SAO PAULO] Does President Fernando Collor de Mello's style make that cooperation easier?

[Benevides] The successive reissuing of various provisional measures, including the one on wages, should make the president and his direct assistants aware that they need to promote negotiation with Congress. No president can evade that process. If the president has not increased his contact with Congress, he will have to do so. It is not proper for me to become a critic of the president at this point. He heads one branch, and I head another. It would not be very ethical at this point for me to criticize his style.

[FOLHA DE SAO PAULO] What is your opinion of Sao Paulo's governor, Orestes Quercia?

[Benevides] There is no doubt that he is now assuming a position of indisputable leadership in Brazilian politics. Not only his administrative successes but also his political-electoral victories—all of that has increased his credibility as regards the succession. He is one of the best cadres the party has, along with other comrades who also have good prospects as far as the presidential race of 1994 is concerned. I served in the Senate with Orestes Quercia, and that experience led me to see him as unyielding in his bills of undeniable public interest. Because of that, important people in the party started seeking him out for advice.

[FOLHA DE SAO PAULO] Is he the party's leading candidate for president?

[Benevides] I cannot deny that at this moment, Quercia has a very wide range of support and much encouragement to run. But the election is a long way off, and it will depend on the delegates to the party's convention.

[FOLHA DE SAO PAULO] Are you one of those who support and encourage his candidacy?

[Benevides] I am chairman of the party section, and obviously, as a delegate, I take a favorable view of his candidacy, although that does not commit me to anything.

[FOLHA DE SAO PAULO] Do you support the idea of Orestes Quercia running for chairman of the PMDB?

[Benevides] Chairman Ulysses Guimaraes has headed the party throughout this period with great dedication. No one has devoted himself to the PMDB more than he has. With all his experience and vitality, he is still the best qualified to continue as chairman of the PMDB. If his name is put before the delegates, he will have my support.

[FOLHA DE SAO PAULO] What is your opinion of Collor Plan II?

[Benevides] I am paying particularly close attention to the wage issue. The wage correction proposed by the administration does not meet the demands of the workers, and that strikes me as the controversial point in the plan. Wages have been frozen, but it is difficult to freeze prices. Past experience supports the concern that with wages frozen and prices rising, we will be making

conditions worse for the working class. We will have to make changes to the administration's bill and present it as an amended bill.

[FOLHA DE SAO PAULO] If the plan fails, what political scenario do you foresee?

[Benevides] We would find ourselves in an even more difficult and chaotic situation. We will find ourselves in a difficult and shaky situation as far as Brazilian life is concerned, with more uneasiness and political conflict. Social conflicts will increase, with a larger number of strikes, and that will affect the country's governability.

[FOLHA DE SAO PAULO] How is Congress going to react to the measures contained in Collor Plan II?

[Benevides] Let no one be deceived: the measures sent to Congress are going to be converted into amended bills. That is inescapable. We are going to offer our cooperation. Because of the amendments presented, it is obvious that there will be changes. I am sending the amendments to Minister Zelia Cardoso so she can study them. There is a desire to participate and improve the plan for combating inflation. I do not believe in polarization to the point of rejection.

* Maciel Views Future Relations With Collor

91SM0213C Rio de Janeiro O GLOBO in Portuguese 11 Feb 91 p 2

[Interview with Senator Marco Maciel by Helena Chagas in Brasilia; date not given: "Bloc of 40 Senators Will Support Administration"; first four paragraphs are O GLOBO introduction]

[Text] Brasilia—The potential government leader in the Senate, Senator Marco Maciel (PFL [Liberal Front Party], Pernambuco)—who already heads the largest party bloc in that house allied to President Collor—expects that as a result of the formation of a bloc of 40 senators supporting the administration, he will improve relations between the executive branch and members of Congress close to Planalto Palace.

In Maciel's view, the word "physiologism" is going to be erased from the political dictionary, because the bloc supporting the administration will have to base its action on programmatic agreement. As far as the PFL senator is concerned, that does not rule out joint participation by members of Congress in the administration's decisions. According to Maciel, President Collor is mindful of that issue.

Maciel feels that on the basis of the new relationship with Congress, it will be possible to implement a national understanding that must include participation by the politicians. In the senator's opinion, the search for a social pact, which has failed innumerable times, was an impossible mission without the support of a prior political agreement.

The Pernambuco senator is in the habit of saying jokingly that when human rights were being written down, the authors forgot the "right to contradict oneself and the right to leave." But jokes aside, Maciel says that his political career has been consistent—a career which includes the break with President Figueiredo and the writing of the agreement establishing the Democratic Alliance in 1984, in which there was a defense of the commitments to liberalism and modernity, both of which, in his opinion, are at the root of President Collor's proposals for the country.

[Chagas] Would the formation of a bloc supporting the administration not be harmful to the administration, seeing that that bloc will exclude the PMDB [Brazilian Democratic Movement Party], which has senators allied with President Collor?

[Maciel] The creation of blocs is of special interest to Congress. We are going to improve the performance of Congress and, especially, prevent a party reform, which strikes me as being inadvisable at the moment. Performance will be better because as we form into blocs, we will have a better definition of the forces existing in Congress. That should accelerate the signing of agreements and the consequent voting on matters before us. As a result, we will no longer be criticized with the argument that we are an institution that meets a lot but decides little. I feel that much of the difficulty Congress has in making decisions is due to the fact that there are no blocs. The formation of blocs will do away with that generic jelly which Congress has been since the party reform of 1985.

[Chagas] How do you define the ideological profile of the bloc that will support the administration in the Senate?

[Maciel] That bloc intends to pursue a policy supported jointly by the parties and the administration. Our support for the administration is not a matter of automatic alignment; it will depend on the existence of identical viewpoints in President Collor's message and the programs of the parties constituting the social-liberal bloc. Our stand is in favor of renewal and modernization. We consider it essential to overcome the ideological Manichaeism of Right versus Left. What the country needs is for the executive and legislative branches to prove themselves competent to consolidate democracy, resume development, and build a more just nation.

[Chagas] Which of those tasks do you think it is most important and urgent to carry out?

[Maciel] The big challenge is to overcome social injustice. I even ask myself whether it might not be more important to start reducing the inequalities which have grown much worse in recent years than to resume our growth. The bloc will be instrumental in achieving that objective.

[Chagas] What will that bloc's leadership do to improve relations between the executive and legislative branches?

[Maciel] We intend to see to it that the administration does not lack the minimum instruments it needs for carrying out the changes being demanded by the country. We are not seeking a physiological relationship in which there is an exchange of offices and duties. The bloc must base its action on programmatic agreement.

[Chagas] But it seems obvious that within the bloc, there is an interest in making and implementing decisions.

[Maciel] President Collor has proven to be mindful of that issue, and he intends to see to it that bills are not sent to Congress without prior discussion.

[Chagas] That relationship was also promised last year, but it did not happen.

[Maciel] But we are now working in that direction, and all indications are that the process will work that way. I hope that those practices will become firmly established in the new legislature. That will be good for the country.

[Chagas] What positions among the Senate's officers is the bloc demanding?

[Maciel] We feel that the time for electing the officers will also be the time to make a major political adjustment. We must not limit the debate to the choosing of officers. Power in Congress rests not only with the officers but also with committees and other areas. In discussing the selection of officers in the Senate, we must also discuss the functioning of Congress. To give you an example: throughout the current legislature, all the principal positions were held by the PMDB. But our proposed agreement involves alternation in office. We will have to use a rotation system in the selection of, for example, committee rapporteurs so that everything will not remain in the hands of one person and one party the whole time.

[Chagas] The administrations with which you have been connected, either as an ally or as a minister, have tried to promote a social pact but have failed. What do you expect from the current talks?

[Maciel] We are on the right path now. I have never believed in the so-called social pact. I have always considered it an impossible mission because we could not even decide who the negotiating parties were supposed to be. I support the thesis that the solution is not a social pact but a political agreement. That is what is being attempted now, and it may succeed—that is, it may lead to the solution of our problems. In Spain, where the Moncloa Pact was successful, the process began with a major political agreement. They started with a political agreement and moved successively closer until they achieved a broad social pact. The politicians defend national interests rather than corporate interests.

[Chagas] Will inflation be knocked out with a political agreement?

[Maciel] Inflation is a financial problem that has a social origin. Inflation is not combated by decree. As long as there is no political agreement capable of mobilizing society, the results will be timid.

[Chagas] You have been a politician aligned with the Federal Government ever since the Geisel administration, and you interrupted that career only twice: at the end of the Figueiredo administration and at the end of the Sarney administration. How do you explain that behavior?

[Maciel] When human rights were being written down, the authors forgot two: the right to contradict oneself and the right to leave. My conduct is extremely consistent. I was one of the four signers and the chief author of the agreement establishing the Democratic Alliance, and at the time—in 1984—what I had in view was the idea that we should come up with a proposal characterized by what we call modernity today and one with its roots in liberalism. I remain faithful to those commitments to modernity, which are the basis of the proposals being offered to the country by President Collor.

* Roles of 'Key' Members of Congress Defined

91SM0213B Sao Paulo FOLHA DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 11 Feb 91 p A5

[Article by Roger Ferreira: "Personality Defines Role of Congressmen"]

[Text] Brasilia—Fewer than 100 of the 584 members of Congress take an active part in congressional life. A small group formulates, debates, coordinates, and creates opinion, and the great majority shows up only to countersign the decisions made by that small group. FOLHA DE SAO PAULO has selected the key members of Congress and divided them by category.

The formulators and debaters are important because they establish the dominant dynamic and agenda in Congress through their speeches, interviews, and bills. In crucial votes, they become the key players in the legislative process and strongly influence the behavior of the committees and the plenary session.

The major coordinators and negotiators are generally leaders of blocs and the most experienced and respected members of their particular parties. They devote themselves to negotiations, the conclusion of agreements, plans for confrontations in committee and in the plenary session, and the use of their skills to maintain party discipline.

The opinion builders are those members of Congress regarded as being highly educated and who, because of their knowledge, influence the climate of opinion in Congress. Belonging to that group are the economists and the leaders with the most charisma.

Congressional Types

The formulators: Jose Serra (PSDB [Brazilian Social Democracy], Sao Paulo), Nelson Jobim (PMDB [Brazilian Democratic Movement Party], Rio de Janeiro),

Josaphat Marinho (PFL [Liberal Front Party], Bahia), Sandra Cavalcanti (PFL, Rio de Janeiro), Aluizio Mercadante (PT [Workers Party], Sao Paulo), Sergio Machado (PSDB, Ceara), Paulino Cicero (PSDB, Minas Gerais), Sergio Arouca (PCB [Brazilian Communist Party], Rio de Janeiro), Roberto Magalhaes (PFL, Pernambuco), Carrion Junior (PDT [Democratic Workers Party], Rio Grande do Sul), and Beni Veras (PSDB, Ceara).

The debaters: Mario Covas (PSDB, Sao Paulo), Gastone Righi (PTB [Brazilian Labor Party], Sao Paulo), Maria Laura (PT, Federal District), Luiz Alfredo Salomao (PDT, Rio de Janeiro), Luiz Gonzaga Motta (PMDB, Ceara), Jose Eduardo Andrade Vieira (PTB, Parana), Jamil Haddad (PSD [Democratic Social Party], Rio de Janeiro), Maria Aparecida Campos Strauss (Cidinha Campos, PDT, Rio de Janeiro), Ronaldo Caiado (PSD, Goias), and Arnaldo Faria de Sa (PRN [National Reconstruction Party], Sao Paulo).

The coordinators and negotiators: Ulysses Guimaraes (PMDB, Sao Paulo), Jose Sarney (PMDB, Amapa), Fernando Henrique Cardoso (PSDB, Sao Paulo), Ibsen Pinheiro (PMDB, Rio Grande do Sul), Arthur da Tavola (PSDB, Rio de Janeiro), Humberto Souto (PFL, Minas Gerais), Jose Richa (PSDB, Parana), Ricardo Fiuza (PFL, Pernambuco), Marco Maciel (PFL, Pernambuco), Luis Roberto Ponte (PMDB, Rio Grande do Sul), Antonio Brito (PMDB, Rio Grande do Sul), Jose Genoino (PT, Sao Paulo), Miro Teixeira (PDT, Rio de Janeiro), Affonso Camargo (PTB, Parana), Luiz Eduardo Magalhaes (PFL, Bahia), Francisco Dornelles (PFL, Rio de Janeiro), Luiz Carlos Santos (PMDB, Sao Paulo), Cleto Falcao (PRN, Alagoas), Tarcisio Delgado (PMDB, Minas Gerais), Espiridao Amin (PDS [Social Democratic Party], Santa Catarina), Pedro Simon (PMDB, Rio Grande do Sul), Jose Roberto Magalhaes Teixeira (PSDB, Sao Paulo), Aluizio Alves (PMDB, Rio Grande do Norte), Genebaldo Correia (PMDB, Bahia), Joao Alves (PFL, Bahia), Paulo Paim (PT, Rio Grande do Sul), Tidei de Lima (PMDB, Sao Paulo), and Antonio Mariz (PMDB, Parana).

The opinion builders: Delfim Netto (PDS, Sao Paulo), Amaral Netto (PDS, Rio de Janeiro), Roberto Campos (PDS, Rio de Janeiro), Miguel Arraes (PMDB, Pernambuco), Helio Bicudo (PT, Sao Paulo), Roberto Freire (PCB, Pernambuco), Maurilio Ferreira Lima (PMDB, Pernambuco), Darcy Ribeiro (PDT, Rio de Janeiro), Waldir Pires (PMDB, Bahia), Alberto Goldman (PMDB, Sao Paulo), Cesar Maia (PDT, Rio de Janeiro), Fabio Feldman (PSDB, Sao Paulo), and Eduardo Suplicy (PT, Sao Paulo).

Quercia Becomes New PMDB Party Chairman

PY2503183991 Brasilia Radio Nacional da Amazonia Network in Portuguese 1000 GMT 25 Mar 91

[Text] The national convention of the PMDB [Brazilian Democratic Movement Party] that was held in Brasilia has confirmed the appointment of former Governor Orestes Quercia as the party chairman. Quercia will replace Deputy Ulysses Guimaraes, who has held this post for the past 20 years.

The first meeting of the new PMDB leadership, presided over by its new chairman, will be held at 0900 today.

Armies Silent About Incident at Colombian Border

PY2603003591 Sao Paulo O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 24 Mar 91 p 8

[By Marcos Emilio Gomes]

[Text] Tabatinga—Silence is the latest weapon to be used by the Brazilian and Colombian Armies in the operation launched in the Amazon jungle following an attack on Brazilian soldiers on 26 February. Following an active period in the jungle, which resulted in seven bodies being buried in the jungle, the tactics now being used include a silence that has been placed over the incident. Buffalo and Hercules aircraft continue to overfly the area where the incidents took place, near the Traira River, 300 km from Tabatinga, and civilian aircraft are prohibited from taking off in Brazilian territory. Radio transmitters, the only means of communication within Colombian territory, are being operated by military men.

Zilda Fonseca Freitas, mother of one of the Brazilian soldiers killed in Traira, has said: "The colonel has prohibited us from discussing the issue." She said that her son, Sidimar, 22, witnessed the violent seizure of gold by Colombian gold miners. Lieutenant Colonel Flavio Teixeira confirmed: "There is no more to be said about the incident; nobody is going to talk about it any more."

Lieutenant Colonel Teixeira said: "Too many version on the clash have been disseminated," referring to the fact that the Colombians do not believe the official version, according to which a patrol found a boat belonging to guerrillas a few kilometers from the Brazilian post that had been attacked. According to this version, the boat was found one week after the attack. During the shootout seven Colombians were killed.

In order to clear up doubts over this version, three Colombian Government representatives went to Leticia. This is a delicate diplomatic issue since the commission may, for example, want to visit the site where the clash took place and may consider the possibility of disinterring the bodies buried in the jungle and identifying them. According to Brazilian Ambassador to Bogota Alberto da Costa e Silva, there has been no such request so far.

Paris Club Decision on Polish Debt Endorsed

PY2203182391 Sao Paulo O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 21 Mar 91 Economic Section p 4

[Excerpt] Brasilia—In spite of originally being against it and having complained about it, Brazil now supports a decision by the Paris Club creditors to reduce Poland's

debt by 50 percent. The measure is seen as a precedent that will help Brazil when the negotiations start in which we are the debtor.

Brazil is the country to which Poland owes its second largest debt. Poland's debt to the Brazilian Government, which originally amounted to $2.2 billion, today stands at nearly $3 billion. It has now been reduced to approximately $1.5 billion. "It is a matter of political realism," said an Itamaraty source, explaining the Brazilian position.

Representatives of the Foreign Ministry and the Economy Ministry participated in the negotiations on 13 March in Paris. At the vote, they said that Brazil would not object to a consensus. They added that Brazil expects the same treatment as that given to Poland over the 50-percent reduction. Brazil's original debt to the Paris Club, an organization of creditor governments, amounted to $9.7 billion but it has now surpassed $10.5 billion. [passage omitted]

Iranian Minister Seeks Part in Reconstruction

PY2103154891 Brasilia Radio Nacional da Amazonia Network in Portuguese 1000 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Iranian Energy Minister Bijan Namdar-Zangeneh will arrive today in Brasilia to discuss Brazil's participation in the reconstruction of his country. Trade with Iran will benefit Brazil to the tune of $12 billion in petroleum or in currency.

President Collor will receive Namdar-Zangeneh at 1700, while the ministers of infrastructure and of foreign affairs will receive him in the morning.

Petrobras To Open New Wells, Invest $2.37 Billion

PY2003142491 Rio de Janeiro O GLOBO in Portuguese 17 Mar 91 p 56

[Text] Campos, Rio de Janeiro—This year Petrobras [Brazilian Petroleum Corporation] will invest 30 percent more than in 1990. On Thursday the Petrobras board approved a budget of $2.37 billion (542.73 billion cruzeiros), and 70 percent is earmarked for investments in the production sector. This report was released yesterday by Joao Carlos Franca de Luca, Petrobras director for research, drilling, and production. Franca de Luca also inaugurated, on Petrobras platform No. 13, Campos Basin, the beginning of production at the Marlin field, the country's largest and deepest field.

Franca de Luca also noted that Petrobras discovered petroleum in new well No. 3-RJS438, 40 km from Marlin, with proven reserves of 140 million barrels.

According to Franca de Luca, Petrobras invested $60 million (13.74 billion cruzeiros) in the Marlin Pilot Plan, to advance the beginning of production in this field before the initially established date of January 1992. The Marlin field has reserves of 3 billion barrels, and yesterday its first well began to produce 3,800 barrels daily, at a record depth of 721 meters.

The Pilot Plan, already approved, anticipates the investment $320 million (73.28 billion cruzeiros) and beginning production at eight other wells and a new platform. The other project is the Stage 2 of the vast Albacora field. Some $2.8 billion (641 billion cruzeiros) will be invested there to produce 195,000 barrels daily until 1995.

Agriculture Minister on Land Expropriation, Drought

PY2303000491 Brasilia Domestic Service in Portuguese 2200 GMT 21 Mar 91

[By Marly Moreira from Sao Paulo]

[Text] The federal government has promoted another instance of land expropriation for agrarian reform purposes. The Cachoeira Preta cattle ranch, in southern Para State, was expropriated today by order of Antonio Cabrera, agriculture and agrarian reform minister. Forty-five families will be settled in the 2,600-hectare area.

Minister Antonio Cabrera made the announcement after he participated in an animal health symposium in Sao Paulo.

Minister Antonio Cabrera also reported that on Friday, 22 March, he will be in Rio Grande do Sul State, closely monitoring the situation of the farmers who have suffered damage from the drought.

[Begin Cabrera recording] We hope to announce as soon as possible measures to combat this problem. These measures will include extension of the repayment periods for farmers' debt notes, emergency credit, and also credit so that cooperatives which financed farmers without resources can have a one- or two-year [word indistinct] to recover from financial losses (?caused) by the farmers' debt notes. [end recording]

Coffee Market Paralyzed by Suspension of Exports

PY2503183191 Brasilia Radio Nacional da Amazonia Network in Portuguese 1000 GMT 25 Mar 91

[Text] The entire Brazilian coffee market has become paralyzed and the price of coffee has dropped by 30 percent following the decision by the government to suspend coffee exports.

This statement was made in Bauru, Sao Paulo State, by (Mauricio Limas Verse Guimaraes), chairman of the coffee growers committee of the Sao Paulo Farmers Federation.

According to (Limas), on 22 March, a 60-kg bag of export grade coffee sold for 20,000 cruzeiros. Following the suspension of coffee exports, buyers are offering only 15,000 cruzeiros per bag.

*** CNBB Document Sparks Polemic Within Church**

91SM0222A Rio de Janeiro O GLOBO in Portuguese 15 Feb 91 p 4

[Text] Brasilia—The publication last Wednesday of the basic document of this year's Fellowship Campaign—the theme of which is "Solidarity in the Dignity of Labor"—has created a controversy among the bishops of the Catholic Church in Brazil. In Rio, Cardinal Eugenio Sales issued a statement in which he takes exception to the paragraph that defends the invasions of factories and lands. In Sao Paulo, Bishop Antonio Celso de Queiroz defended the campaign's theme and said that the Church should always be on the side of those who have been marginalized.

In Brasilia, CNBB [National Conference of Brazilian Bishops] advisors explained that the high priority accorded to socioeconomic problems on the list of the Church's activities—as proposed in the document—prefigures the tone of the National Assembly of Bishops, which will be held in Itaici in April. This year the CNBB will reassess the objectives and directives of pastoral action in Brazil and elect the new president and the Bishops' Pastoral Committee.

The document published by the CNBB orients the activities of the religious community toward action in concert with the labor organizations and with the labor unions in particular, but it primarily recommends that the religious community function as unifiers and defenders of the workers' interests.

According to the CNBB advisers, the Fellowship Campaign also serves to indicate that the "Objective and Directives of the Church's Pastoral Action in Brazil"—a document that will be voted on in Itaici—will strengthen the pastoral nuclei in the central districts and suburbs of the large cities. In this context, the CPO (Workers' Pastoral Commission) will assume the role played in the 1980's by the CPT (Pastoral Land Commission), which triggered the ruralist movements and gave rise to the movement of the "Landless."

"In those days the rural populations were completely disorganized and without any pole of unification," Father Dagoberto Boim, executive secretary of the Fellowship Campaign, recalls. "The CPT fulfilled this role, and the movements of the agricultural workers are today walking without crutches."

Campaign Theme Chosen in 1988

Brasilia—The theme of this year's Fellowship Campaign—"Solidarity in the Dignity of Labor"—was chosen in 1988 by the National Assembly of Bishops of Brazil based on a document produced by the National Confederation of Bishops of Brazil [CNBB] entitled, "The Church: Communion and Mission in the Evangelization of the Peoples in the World of Labor, Politics, and Culture." The CNBB explores the debate over labor relations in the year when the Catholic Church is commemorating the 100th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical "Rerum Novarum" (New Realities), which was the first pronouncement by the Vatican concerning the effects of industrialization on the structure of society.

On the basis of the initial CNBB document, Father Dagoberto Boim, executive secretary of the Fellowship Campaign, and Afonso Felipe Gregori, auxiliary bishop of Imperatriz, Maranhao State, collected suggestions from the rank-and-file communities, principally the Workers' Pastoral Organizations in the various states. These documents were subsequently complemented by theoretical studies prepared by IBASE (Brazilian Institute of Socioeconomic Analysis), DIEESE (Interunion Department of Statistical and Socioeconomic Studies), and FIPE (Economic Research Institute Foundation).

In July of last year the basic document was finalized by the executive secretariat of the Fellowship Campaign and approved by the CNBB leadership. In the interval between the document's approval and its dispatch to the printer in September, the CNBB theoreticians experienced some uneasy moments because of the possibility that President Fernando Collor's promises to bring change to the nation in 100 days might be fulfilled. In view of the rise in unemployment and underemployment and the decline in real wages, however, the CNBB concluded that the statistics supporting its publication were still applicable.

Rio Archdiocese Gives Conditional Approval

The cardinal archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, Eugenio Sales, yesterday chose not to comment on the basic document of this year's Fellowship Campaign. Late in the afternoon the archdiocese issued a press release declaring that one of the more controversial points in the basic document "cannot be accepted uncritically." Following is the complete text of the press release:

"The Coordinating Committee for the Fellowship Campaign in the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro sees in the campaigns's theme and slogan, "Solidarity in the Dignity of Labor," an excellent opportunity for reflection with a view to implementing the Church's Social Doctrine as it applies to this issue.

"The Coordinating Committee explains that the proposal of the basic document (item 215, page 100) to the effect that the Church's pastoral activity has the duty to "support, and be in solidarity with, the struggles of the workers.... Espouse the struggles, and be present at the side of the workers (for example, in cases of the occupation of property, strikes, house-raisings, and so forth).

"The Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro, in accordance with the Social Doctrine of the Church, recognizes strikes when they are legitimate and when they are employed only as a last resort to obtain justice. It likewise does not support invasions or house-raisings that are not based on just and legal grounds.

"[signed] Candido Feliciano da Ponte Neto, coordinator of the Fellowship Campaign in the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro."

Bishop Boaventura Is Critical; Bishop Ivo Does Not Disapprove

Porto Alegre—Boaventura Kloppenburg, bishop of Novo Hamburgo, was not pleased with the basic document of the Fellowship Campaign, and decided that in his diocese the "reflection" would be limited to Leo XIII's encyclical Rerum Novarum. He emphasized that when he began to read the document he perceived its very radical character and stopped reading. Although he agrees with the central theme of "Solidarity in the Dignity of Labor," he believes that you do not achieve a climate of fellowship by setting workers against employers. It is his view that by themselves the workers will achieve nothing, and likewise the employers, and believes that fellowship is possible only through the accord proposed by the government.

Ivo Lorscheiter, bishop of Santa Maria and president of South Regional District III of the CNBB, maintains that Boaventura's interpretation is somewhat hyperbolic. He believes that the campaign document is merely a depiction of reality and an appeal to Catholics to reflect on the situation of urban and rural workers. Moreover, he believes that although the Fellowship Campaign is unified around the central theme, it leaves each diocese free to interpret the reality of its particular region.

CNBB President Says Occupation of Factories Not Supported

Belo Horizonte—Bishop Luciano Mendes de Almeida, president of the CNBB, declared yesterday that support for the invasion of factories is not part of Church doctrine. He made a point of quoting a portion of the basic document of this year's Fellowship Campaign to support his statement that property rights are recognized by the Church.

The CNBB president said that Church doctrine concerning the right to strike is clear.

"Only those workers who are conscientious and organized are capable of using the right to strike legitimately in defense of their rights," the CNBB president said. To support his thesis he quoted Page 93 of the document to the effect that Church doctrine recognizes the right to strike of all workers, as a legitimate form of trade union activity.

Serafim Fernandes de Araujo, archbishop of Belo Horizonte, had already denied yesterday that the CNBB document supports the invasion of rural properties or the occupation of factories.

"I read the document," he declared, "and I did not find what they are talking about."

CNBB Secretary General Says Church Should Stand With the Poor

Sao Paulo—Antonio Celso Queiroz, secretary general of the CNBB, said yesterday that the Church recognizes strikes and occupations of factories or land—provided these actions are peaceful—as valid forms of pressure used by a marginalized population in a struggle for better living conditions.

"When there is no other solution," he said, "the Church should support these forms of action and place itself at the side of the marginalized population, especially when these forms of action are the outgrowth of social insensitivity."

He said that in the document—which establishes the directives of this year's Fellowship Campaign—the CNBB rouses the public to ethical indignation and righteous anger against living conditions that are shameful or immoral. This does not mean, he emphasized, that the Church is encouraging the public to move toward extreme forms of action.

The secretary general also said that the existence of a conflict etween capital and labor has been recognized in Church doctrine for 100 years, ever since Pope Leo drafted the encyclical "Rerum Novarum"—the first encyclical to deal with workers' rights.

"Even the most conservative analysis by the Church," he said in conclusion, "demonstrates that the origin of the conflict is to be found in the competing interests of capital and labor. In positioning itself at the side of those who are weakest, the Church should demonstrate its solidarity by helping them resolve these conflicts and by providing guidance."

The Cause of the Controversy: the Campaign's "Basic Document" of Total Support for Mobilizations, Strikes, and Invasions

Here are some of the controversial points in the basic document of the campaign, "Solidarity in the Dignity of Labor," published by the CNBB simultaneously with the opening of the Fellowship Campaign:

"Support, and be in solidarity with, the workers' struggles that are taking place in our local churches. Espouse the struggles, and be present at the side of the workers (for example, in cases of the occupation of property, strikes, house-raisings, and so forth).

"Through the work of consciousness-raising, assist the workers' rank-and-file organizations in the urban neighborhoods, in the factories, and in the rural communities.

"Recognize and develop, in our local churches, an awareness that the workers' organizations (the Labor Movement, the People's Movement, and participation in the Political Movement) are living forms for manifesting, and making explicit and concrete, the process of bringing about the Kingdom of God.

"Invite individuals who are members of the workers' movements, or the Social Movement, to give their testimony, relate their experiences, and bear witness to the importance of these organizations to society.

"Espouse observance of the commemorative dates of the workers' struggles, as for example 8 March (International Woman's Day); 1 May (Day of the Worker); 20 June (Day of the Migrant); 25 July (Day of the Agricultural Worker); 11 October (Day of the Peoples' Martyrs of Latin America); 20 November (National Black Awareness Day); and others, by involving the local community as participants in meetings, celebrations, pilgrimages, and so forth.

"Create, in the parishes and communities, workers' rank-and-file groups to encourage the study and comprehension of the history of the working class and the social teachings of the Church, as well as biblical and theological instruction concerning the world of labor.

"The attainment of social justice requires that steps be taken to implement agrarian reform and reform urban land use, so as to facilitate access to—and the possession and use of—rural and urban land, as follows: Guarantee possession of the land to those who actually work it; prohibit the eviction of those who are actually utilizing urban or rural land to support their families, with the state being responsible for enforcing land policy by means of specific legislation; establish a suitable agrarian policy and agricultural policy that will provide conditions for the rural dweller to remain on the land and cultivate it; create mechanisms that will prevent the concentration of land ownership, given the fact that the Constitution itself establishes the maximum size of a rural property; create a system of agrarian courts that will anticipate disputes and facilitate their solution; and establish an urban land use policy that will give all citizens access to housing—a policy that presupposes action to prevent the hoarding of urban areas and curb real estate speculation.

"The remuneration of labor should take precedence over the remuneration of capital.

"The right to strike should be recognized as applying to all workers without any discrimination, as a legitimate form of labor union action, albeit as the last resort in labor negotiations. Consequently, the use of the right to strike should also be acknowledged for workers in those services that are essential to the life of the community."

Chile

Defense Minister Views Relations With U.S.

PY2303232091 Santiago LA TERCERA DE LA HORA in Spanish 19 Mar 91 p 7

[Text] After returning from the United States, Defense Minister Patricio Rojas reported that he had been officially invited to visit some EEC countries this year to address military matters. He added that it will probably be "several months" before any concrete military arrangement is concluded with the United States. The minister and his entourage arrived at Comodoro Arturo Merino Benitez International Airport at 1100 aboard Air Force plane 903, which brought him back from the northern nation after a 10-day visit at the invitation of Defense Secretary Richard Cheney. Minister Rojas held high-level meetings in the Pentagon and visited military academies and bases.

A few minutes before landing at the airport in Santiago, the minister said: "We saw a proud country with a strong spirit of victory. This has strengthened U.S. unity behind efforts for an economic recovery; this recovery will have major effects in Chile, including through our participation in the free trade zone. In addition, there is confidence in our institutional process and in the way in which we are moving forward. Everything seems to indicate that our bilateral relations will be very positive in the future. We have undoubtedly fulfilled our objectives."

[LA TERCERA] What is the specific date on which Chile will begin to receive military equipment?

[Rojas] It should be pointed out that it is not only military supplies but also equipment to be used for peaceful purposes. Due to the current situation in the Persian Gulf, it will probably be necessary to wait several months before receiving exact information on the availability of planes, ships, or other materiel. Concerning spare parts and equipment, purchases are being implemented through the appropriate channels. I hope that what I referred to as leasing to Chile will be arranged this year. This type of deal, like the purchase of two Hercules C-130 planes, is closer to our possibilities.

[LA TERCERA] Mr. Minister, now that relations have been normalized, do you think the Armed Forces have regained the confidence of the United States?

[Rojas] The fact that the three armed branches are included shows that confidence does exist and that there is interest in the Chilean Army, Navy, and Air Force.

[LA TERCERA] Did you notice during the negotiations that efforts were being made to recover U.S. confidence in Chileans?

[Rojas] I think so. The point is that normalcy cannot be restored overnight after the cold atmosphere of the past. Our main guidelines, however, are undoubtedly on the right track. All my experiences have been positive.

[LA TERCERA] Is there any difference between this phase of the military dialogue and the previous one?

[Rojas] It is obvious that in the past there was not enough political will. Also, no funds had been set aside. Now the U.S. Congress has already earmarked funds for Chile to carry out these programs.

[LA TERCERA] Are you aware that the presence of Edward Kennedy at a reception you hosted in our embassy in Washington caused some controversy?

[Rojas] I am not aware of any controversies because Senator Kennedy visited Chile when the new government came to power. On that occasion there were no demonstrations against him. During his visit I talked with him about the lifting of the Kennedy Amendment and that, consequently, I could successfully predict that the sanctions would be lifted. Edward Kennedy is an outstanding personality in the United States. He supported our democratic process and the work by President Aylwin. I therefore see no reason to have any negative attitude toward him.

[LA TERCERA] Why did the Carabineros not participate in these military meetings in the United States?

[Rojas] The Carabineros did not participate because the Defense Department has relations only with the Armed Forces. For the U.S. Government, a police organization operates in a totally different manner. That is why these conversations were exclusively of a military nature.

Lacalle Meets President, Foreign Minister

Silva Cimma on Bush Initiative

PY2203150491 Santiago Radio Nacional de Chile Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Foreign Minister Enrique Silva Cimma has pointed out that Uruguayan President Luis Alberto Lacalle's official visit to Chile shows our country's degree of integration with the other Latin American countries. He added that harmony and coincident opinions prevail in Chilean-Uruguayan relations and that President Lacalle's visit will improve and materialize our mutual relations within the framework of Latin American integration.

Minister Silva Cimma also commented on National Renewal Deputy Federico Mekis' criticism of the Chilean Government's slowness in making its role in the Americas Initiative proposed by U.S. President George Bush more concrete.

[Begin Silva Cimma recording] Knowing what the government is doing in this regard, I can say that it is doing its utmost to speed up the process. [end recording]

The minister added that the U.S. Government and the Chilean Government agree that, after the accords between Mexico and the United States are signed, the next country on the agenda will be Chile.

Lacalle Views Integration

PY2203161091 Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 21 Mar 91

[By Daniela Araneda from the Economic Commission for Latin America headquarters]

[Text] Uruguayan President Luis Alberto Lacalle pointed out today that integration is not a magic word and it does not mean a certainty of anything; rather, it is an opportunity for almost everything. The president, who is visiting our country, delivered a speech at ECLA [Economic Commission for Latin America] headquarters emphasizing that justice and equality must prevail in the productive transformation of our countries.

In light of the upcoming creation of a common market with Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil, President Lacalle commented on what integration means to him.

[Begin Lacalle recording] Integration does not mean a certainty of anything. It creates opportunities, however, for almost everything. Integration must link us to reality. Through integration, we must replace the principles of security with the principles of risk. If we can achieve this through integration, integration will be a very important thing. If integration means believing in miracles that do not exist, it will be nothing but futile ambition and will be reduced to a set of diplomatic and political maneuvers by international officials. [end recording]

Lacalle pointed out that integration must involve all structures of society—such as governments, businessmen, and workers—so that no sector of society is outside of it.

Regarding Bush's Americas Initiative, President Lacalle said it represents a very important qualitative change that may be the most important change proposed by the United States in the last 30 years. He said it offers Latin America an opportunity to show that it is not interested in occupying a subordinate position with regard to the United States, but is interested in enjoying healthy competition with the northern country.

Aylwin Stresses Joint Effort

PY2203180291 Santiago Radio Nacional de Chile Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Excerpts] President Patricio Aylwin asserted yesterday at La Moneda that the joint efforts of the Governments of Chile and Uruguay will result in concrete proposals to solve the great challenges Latin America will face in the future. Aylwin said the two countries are being called upon by history to perform their traditional roles of moderators and sponsors of efforts to achieve international understanding. Aylwin made these comments during a speech welcoming President Luis Alberto Lacalle, who is on an official visit to Chile until 23 March. [passage omitted]

In his speech expressing thanks for the Order of Merit decoration that was bestowed upon him, President Lacalle emphasized the brotherly ties that unite the Chilean and Uruguayan peoples and the two peoples' efforts to fulfill ideals. He also emphasized mutual efforts to maintain permanent cooperation in the economic, scientific, and cultural fields and to achieve

ever-increasing understanding among Latin American countries. [passage omitted]

During the private award ceremony, President Patricio Aylwin said Chile is working to strengthen and consolidate the democratic system by treading the path of truth, justice, and reconciliation. He said this is a task for all Chileans and it should come before any legitimate difference or disagreement. During the official reception on the La Moneda patio, President Aylwin delivered a speech in honor of the illustrious visiting president. In the speech, Aylwin said that as a result of the painful events experienced by Chile, the people learned the value of a democratic, human, and civilized coexistence and the need to carefully preserve it. [passage omitted]

In a speech delivered at ECLA [Economic Commission for Latin America] headquarters, President Lacalle emphasized the role of the economists in the modernization process. He said that government officials and economists need each other in their efforts to improve the people's standard of living.

After eating lunch at ECLA headquarters, President Lacalle left for Valparaiso, where he was received by a special Congress plenum. Lacalle addressed the Congress and called for reconciliation among Chileans and calling for Latin American integration.

[Begin recording] [Lacalle] If I want to address the Chilean people, I must address their representatives. Therefore, after meeting with you I feel that I have addressed each and every one of you.

[Unidentified reporter] Do you trust the integration movement?

[Lacalle] Yes, I do. [end recording] [passage omitted]

World, Regional Situation Noted

PY2303184091 Santiago Radio Nacional de Chile Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 23 Mar 91

[Text] Uruguayan President Luis Alberto Lacalle will return to his country after midday today. During his stay in Chile he attended a plenary session of Congress and met with the acting president of the Supreme Court, among other activities. Lacalle was also declared an illustrious guest of Santiago. President Aylwin decorated the Uruguayan president with the Chilean Order of Merit.

In their conversations, the two presidents carefully analyzed the situation at a regional and world level. They expressed satisfaction with the progress of democracy and respect for human rights. Aylwin and Lacalle also expressed their satisfaction with the end of military operations in the Persian Gulf and the restoration of Kuwaiti sovereignty. They reiterated their countries' support for peace and the need to observe international law and strengthen the United Nations and the OAS.

The president expressed satisfaction with the resumption of the Uruguay round of GATT talks, which will seek to reverse protectionist trends, especially in the agricultural sector.

The presidents reaffirmed the importance of the Rio Group as a permanent consultation and coordination mechanism.

The Chilean president was pleased to accept an invitation extended by the Uruguayan president to visit Uruguay on a date to be established through diplomatic channels.

Lacalle Holds News Conference

PY2303235091 Santiago Radio Nacional de Chile Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 23 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Uruguayan President Luis Alberto Lacalle has admitted that Chile, with its current economic-entrepreneurial situation, can succeed anywhere in the world and does not need to join the common market of America's Southern Cone countries. Nonetheless, he emphasized that it would be very positive if our country joined the market in the future. Lacalle held a news conference at a hotel in downtown Santiago.

[Begin Lacalle recording] Chile currently has an economic-entrepreneurial structure that is quite capable of sailing in all the world's trade waters and it does not need to join [the Common Market of the South—Mercosur]. Chile does indeed have and will have an opportunity, and it will analyze this opportunity from the viewpoint of its own interests, as is appropriate for a country with strong nationalistic values.

Otherwise, the Mercosur will demonstrate its effectiveness through Chile's joining or not joining, or Chile's interest or lack of interest in it. One bit of proof that Mercosur is functioning well will be whether Chile will want to join. We have discussed this issue; we have discussed it in exactly these terms.

There is a lot for us to do. Uruguay has an economy that is very well adapted to this. Nevertheless, it is no secret to you that the agreement, the linking of the Mercosur economies, will be the great challenge, and Chile will be able to adopt a wait-and-see attitude. Chile will be present with its observers, with its traditional friendship and relations, but it will observe the Mercosur from the viewpoint of its own interests.

If the Mercosur is successful and Chile joins, well then, that will be proof of its effectiveness. [end recording]

Moving on, Lacalle emphasized that a democratic system is undoubtedly the best for carrying out social and economic work, as long as it is effective. Otherwise, Lacalle added, we will just stick to a mere institutional system.

Lacalle indicated that his visit to Chile was a gateway for future cultural, technological, and commercial exchanges between the Uruguayan and Chilean societies.

Asked his opinion about the human rights violations that took place in Chile during the military regime, the Uruguayan president pointed out that every country must face this problem within its own parameters. Not all the de facto governments were alike; therefore, every country must provide the solution it believes most appropriate, preserving its sovereignty as it sees fit, he said. There are no recipes or technological transfers to solve this issue, the head of state emphasized.

Uruguayan President Luis Alberto Lacalle, who made a four-day official visit to Chile, left for his country shortly after noon today. He was seen off at the international airport by President Patricio Aylwin and high-ranking government officials. [passage omitted]

Stange: Communique Not Response to Rettig Report

PY2503235091 Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 25 Mar 91

[Text] Carabineros Director General Rodolfo Stange has stated that the Carabineros communique released on 22 March was not a response to the Rettig report and that the Carabineros organization will submit its analysis of the matter at the Security Council meeting on 27 March.

General Stange explained that the text released on Friday was only the expression of a viewpoint and that the report to be submitted at the important meeting on 27 March will contribute to analyzing the document issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Stange refused to comment on the Senate's approval of an amendment to Article 9 of the Constitution, which authorizes the president of the Republic to grant pardons. He stated that this is a resolution issued by an autonomous governmental branch, the National Congress, and that it will become law when it is published in the official gazette.

Regarding violence, General Stange said the Carabineros have been facing this problem alone for a long time. Now we are satisfied because the people are becoming aware that violence is not an issue to be faced by the police forces alone, that all of society must confront it, he said.

Stange made these remarks after meeting with Education Minister Ricardo Lagos and signing an agreement on the training of traffic monitors, in which both institutions will cooperate. Minister Lagos stressed the importance of this agreement and added that traffic regulations will be included in education programs at the elementary and high school level.

Aylwin To Decide on Pardons Before 6 Apr

PY2603151691 Santiago Radio Nacional de Chile Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Excerpts] On 6 April President Aylwin will begin a 20-day tour of several European countries. Aylwin's entourage will include his wife and a group of ministers headed by Foreign Minister Enrique Silva Cimma. Aylwin will visit Spain, the United Kingdom, Holland, French, Italy, the Vatican, and Germany. [passage omitted]

Justice Minister Francisco Cumplido has reported that before leaving for Europe President Aylwin will make a decision on the pardon requests for those prosecuted under the antiterrorist law. He added that of 130 possible pardon requests, a total of 18 have been submitted thus far.

Cumplido said Aylwin will analyze each case, but this does not mean all of them will be immediately released. Cumplido said that after a decision is made on a pardon request, the correspondent decree must be promulgated and sent to the comptroller's office for acknowledgment. He made it clear that there must be a final ruling on all prosecutions in order to grant a pardon. He said President Aylwin does not want to temporarily pardon a person who is facing several trials unless it would make that person eligible for the provisional freedom that can be granted by the court.

RN Senator Comments on Presidential Pardon Issue

PY2603030091 Santiago Radio Nacional de Chile Network in Spanish 2300 GMT 25 Mar 91

[Text] Sergio Onofre Jarpa of the National Renewal [RN] has reiterated that his party proposed and supported the constitutional reform to restore the power of the nation's president to grant pardons because this is a realistic and appropriate solution. He confirmed that he has been invited to have a talk with President Aylwin at La Moneda.

Senator Sergio Onofre Jarpa has reiterated that his party proposed the initiative that resulted in a reform of the Constitution to restore the president's full power to grant pardons because it was a realistic and appropriate solution, so much so that the initiative elicited broad support from the majority in the congressional plenum. He rejected statements that have been made to confuse the public and explained that, in turn, some people who questioned this support proposed and supported a basic agreement to grant penalty reductions to prisoners, including those accused of terrorist crimes, which would eliminate any chance of analyzing each particular case.

Jarpa insisted that both this constitutional reform and the amnesty law of 1978 are steps in the process of healing the wounds of the past and promoting harmonious coexistence among Chileans.

It was pointed out to Senator Sergio Onofre Jarpa that a UDI [Independent Democratic Union] senator had said that the pardons could boomerang if they did not meet the expectations of the so-called political prisoners. The RN senator replied that the nation's president should be asked about that.

[Begin Jarpa recording] We proposed granting a power that we hope the president will use with the utmost reponsibility and judgment. If we do not think the president can act in this manner, the Constitution should be reformed to discard the presidential form of government and the various broad powers the president is granted through the Constitution to govern the country and resolve a myriad of problems. [end recording]

Asked about the attitude the UDI may adopt to express its concern, Jarpa said that, due perhaps to the fact that recent terrorist acts have created a climate of fear, the public could be confused by the assertion that such power should not have been vested in the chief of state.

Jarpa confirmed that he had been invited to La Moneda but declined to reveal the subject of any possible discussion with the president.

Asked about the meeting of the National Security Council, Jarpa said he hopes it will be useful in putting things where they should be and in ending the campagin against the Armed Forces so that, united, we can devote our efforts to solving our problems and developing the country. He expressed the hope that differences will not be exacerbated and that the appropriate constitutional organs will be used to resolve discrepacies. Jarpa noted that his party resorted to the constitutional court to defend the right of association, specifically as it applies to the suspension of the legal status of the Dignidad Colony.

[Begin Jarpa recording] In making such a presentation, we are not moved by a desire to attack the government but rather a desire to see the constitutionally established mechanism for these types of consultations or presentations in operation. A wide-ranging campaign has been launched against us just because we resorted to a constitutional mechanism. There are people who talk a lot about democracy but impede the operation of democratic mechanisms. [end recording]

Concluding, Jarpa noted that he agreed with the president of the Social Democratic Party, Senator Andres Saldivar, that relations between civilians—particularly the political parties—and the Armed Forces should be improved, and not only with the Armed Forces but with all the institutions that are fundamental to the country's stability.

Ministry Statement on Border With Argentina

PY2303181091 Santiago Radio Nacional de Chile Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 23 Mar 91

[Text] In light of the statements by Senator Hugo Ortiz, who has charged that Argentine border police have occupied 500 square km on the Argentine-Chilean border in the (Laguna del Desierto) zone, the Foreign Ministry has issued an official statement noting that the two governments have held positive talks in a search for appropriate solutions to issues.

The statement says: Chilean President Patricio Aylwin and Argentine President Carlos Menem, in their joint declaration of 2 August 1990, instructed their representatives in the joint border committee to report within 60 days a list of pending border problems between the two countries.

The committee fulfilled this mission in 15 days, submitting to the president a list of 24 issues, including the (Laguna del Desierto) issue.

The official statement concludes by saying that the two governments have held positive conversations with the aim of finding appropriate solutions to those issues.

Army Representative Absent From FACh Ceremony

PY2203191391 Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 21 Mar 91

[by Claudio Lefort from the El Bosque Air Force base]

[Excerpts] Air Force General Fernando Matthei, the Chilean Air Force [FACh] commander in chief, today ratified to President Patricio Aylwin that the Air Force is dedicated to its professional tasks within the framework of the Constitution. He did so in a speech that he delivered during a ceremony this afternoon in which the FACh celebrated 61 years of existence. The ceremony was attended by the President Patricio Aylwin, ministers of state, congressmen, representatives from other Armed Forces, and foreign military representatives.

[Begin Matthei recording] In your presence, we reiterate our commitment to continue our professional path within the framework of the Constitution, purely serving our fatherland until the end. [end recording]

The absence of a general representing the Army at the ceremony called the attention of the press. The Carabineros were represented by General Rodolfo Stange and the Navy was represented by Navy Services Director Vice Admiral Claudio Aguayo. [passage omitted]

Defense Minister Patricio Rojas said that he expects to meet soon with the Army commander in chief, who has been out of his office for various reasons.

Asked about the absence of an general to represent the Army at the FACh ceremony, the defense minister said he knew of no explanation for it.

The defense minister was asked about repeated reports that the FACh commander in chief would resign soon. Matthei said that President Aylwin has already addressed this matter and that he had nothing more to add in this respect.

Retired General Involved in Real Estate Scandal

PY2403034091 Madrid EFE in English 0328 GMT 24 Mar 91

[Text] Santiago, March 23 (EFE)—A warrant was issued Saturday [23 March] for the arrest of a retired Chilean Army general over the illegal sale of a public building where political detainees were tortured and killed during the dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Gen. Hugo Salas Wenzel, former chief of the disbanded National Information Center secret police organization, was ordered to be detained for allegedly selling the Villa Grimaldi property to relatives without putting the building up for auction.

Salas' wife and her husband were also included on the arrest warrant as the alleged beneficiaries of the sale of the property in an eastern suburb of Santiago which they had intended to demolish to build an exclusive apartment block.

Salas was the Army's third-ranking general behind Pinochet before he was abruptly retired last October in the wake of the so-called Cutufa scandal.

The scandal centered on the spectacular crash last year of a Chilean investment company that made a number of dubious and ultimately disastrous deals using funds reportedly provided by top military and civilian officials in Pinochet's government.

If found guilty Salas would serve out a possible prison sentence at a military barracks rather than in a civilian jail, thanks to a law passed by Pinochet several years ago.

Thousands of leftist sympathizers were tortured and murdered during Pinochet's 1973-90 military dictatorship, which came to an end a year ago when the general handed over to his elected successor Patricio Aylwin.

Under the military-drafted constitution, Gen. Pinochet continues as head of the Army until 1997.

Survey Shows Aylwin Popularity Increasing

PY2503193391 Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 25 Mar 91

[Text] Reporting on the results of a survey carried out between 9 and 16 March in 29 Chilean cities, CERC [Center for Contemporary Reality Studies] director Marta Lagos has stated that 61.2 percent of those polled have termed positive the work of President Patricio Aylwin.

The results show that 82.3 percent of those surveyed support the president's work. This reveals an increase compared with August 1990, when Aylwin obtained 74.4 percent.

Asked whether General Pinochet should continue as the Army commander in chief, 72.2 percent said that he must resign.

Concerning the level of cooperation by the individual Armed Forces branches toward the democratic process, 80 percent of those surveyed opted for the Air Force, followed by the Carabineros with 79.5 percent.

Lagos said that the judicial branch was harshly criticized for its task during the military regime.

[Begin Lagos recording] The judicial branch was harshly criticized in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. Those polled were asked about the behavior of judges and courts during former regime. Some 14.3 percent said that judges performed well while 72.3 said they did a bad job. Concerning the need to reform the judicial branch, 52 percent said that it must be completely changed, 30 percent said that it must be modified, and only 8 percent said that it should not be modified. [end recording]

Asked their opinions of the political parties, 40.1 percent supported the Christian Democratic Party, 14.2 the Party for Democracy, 10.3 the Renewal Party, and 8.6 percent for the Socialist Party.

Asked for which party they would never vote, 44.7 percent was again the Communist Party and 21.7 percent against the UDI [Independent Democratic Party].

The people polled assigned an average 5.36 [not further specified] grade to Aylwin's cabinet members.

Asked about the impact of the Rettig report, 52.3 percent said they were satisfied and 31.5 percent voiced their disagreement.

Colombia

Minister Confirms Discharge of Belgian Envoy

PA2603032491 Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 0200 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Report by Amparo Gomez]

[Text] Foreign Minister Luis Fernando Jaramillo has stated that the removal of the Belgian ambassador is exemplary. On 25 March, NOTICIAS UNO reported that the Belgian ambassador, who had referred to Colombia in derogatory terms, had been expeditiously discharged from his post. The foreign minister said the Belgian ambassador's disparaging remarks against our country justified his dismissal. He added that, although the diplomat's words would not have an impact on important international organizations such as the EEC, the Belgian Government had ratified its willingness to support our country with the sovereign decision to discharge the ambassador.

[Begin Jaramillo recording] The Belgian Government has already made the decision. It has expeditiously discharged this gentlemen who, apparently, has had some health problems. With this act, the Belgian Government has fully taken away his authority and this is

enough for us. The decision was made by the Belgian Government in a free, voluntary, and unilateral manner. The decision was made because the Belgian Government felt it was ill-represented in Colombia. The Colombian Government has nothing more to say. [end recording]

Like the Belgian ambassador, the foreign minister also referred to his alleged relationship with the Italian Intermetro firm. Luis Fernando Jaramillo, who has also held the post of public works and transport minister, explained that the decision to choose the Italian proposal had been made after receiving evaluations and recommendations from the U.S. firms that have been contracted to carry out these studies.

Power to Meta Cut by Possible FARC Attack

PA2603141791 Bogota Radio Cadena Nacional in Spanish 1209 GMT 26 Mar 91

[Text] Villavicencio, the capital of Meta Department, has been suffering a power outage since 0130 this morning. The outage was apparently caused by a terrorist attack by FARC [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia] against the electric power grid.

Authorities report that the peasants who live in Caqueza and Puente Quetame heard an explosion in the morning hours. Army and police patrols are carrying out intense operations to try to find out what really happened with the electric system.

It was also reported that there has been a decrease in the transportation services between Villavicencio and Bogota.

The emergency has affected the capital of Meta Department and 27 other municipalities in the department.

A group of engineers, technicians, and members of the Armed Forces left for Puente La Balsa to try to establish whether this was a new terrorist attack by FARC against the electric power network. The city of Villavicencio has been left without electricity.

The Meta electricity enterprise reported that Villavicencio and 27 other municipalities have no electricity. The electricity company spokesmen reported that it is believed that one of the electrical towers of the network between Bogota and Meta Department was blown up.

New Defense Brigade Introduced To Fight Rebels

PA2603015591 Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 2 in Spanish 0000 GMT 23 Mar 91

[Text] Today the Defense Ministry today publically presented Mobile Brigade No. 2, which will fight guerrillas in various areas of the country. The brigade is made of 1,800 men distributed among four battalions. Beginning today, they will be retrained for a month and a half. They will have 20 vehicles, nine helicopters, and be supported by tactical units.

Paraguay

Journalist Unions Repudiate Attack on Reporters

PY2503212191 Asuncion ABC COLOR in Spanish 25 Mar 91 p 11

[Text] The Paraguayan Journalists Union (SPP), the Association of Paraguayan Photographers, and the National Union of Printing Shop Workers have repudiated the attack against ABC COLOR photographer Jorge Caceres and driver Egidio Gimenez outside the presidential residence. The organizations demand the immediate release of the two workers, who are being held at the presidential escort regiment.

In a note the organizations states: "We strongly repudiate this serious attack and the shameless action of the military authorities who arrested the victims, and we know nothing about any action against the aggressors."

The Paraguayan Association of Photographers voiced concern over the aggression against Jorge Caceres and Egidio Gimenez and over their arrest.

The National Union of Printing Shop Workers warned "of this action which violates the legal rules of democratic coexistence and which represents a return to heavy-handed procedures against individual rights and freedom of the press."

Peru

Officials Comment on Health Workers' Strike

PY2403212091 Madrid EFE in English 0445 GMT 24 Mar 91

[Text] Lima, March 23 (EFE)—A week-long strike by 85,000 Peruvian health workers could endanger government efforts to stem the country's cholera epidemic that has already claimed more than 500 lives, Health Ministry officials said Saturday [23 March].

The work stoppage by 80,000 public health employees and 5,000 state nurses could have "serious consequences" for the treatment of some 25,000 people who have been hospitalized with the disease, the officials said.

Because of the walkout by health workers, relatives of cholera patients have had to clean hospital wards to maintain standards of hygiene, officials said.

Nurses rejected a 95-percent pay offer last month, and union leaders said they would resist government attempts to cut jobs in health care as part of a policy to reduce the state sector's one-million-strong workforce.

A three-month strike by health workers last year led to mass closures of hospitals with patients forced home or transferred for treatment at military or police hospitals.

Almost 89,000 people have contracted cholera since the first outbreak was reported on 23 January. The disease is believed to have originated in contaminated shellfish.

President Briefed on Andean Group Economic Aid

PY2303002991 Lima RTP Television Network in Spanish 0100 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Excerpts] Colombian Development Minister Ernesto Samper Pizano has reported that the Andean Development Corporation [CAF] has approved a grant of $500,000 for Peru. He made this statement after a meeting with Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, who was accompanied by Industry Minister Victor Joy Way.

Joy Way also said that Colombia and Venezuela have made an initial contribution of $100 million in cooperation with Peru to be reimbursed through the international financial system. [sentence as heard]

[Begin recording] [passage omitted] [Unidentified reporter] Have restrictions on Peruvian exports been completely lifted?

[Samper] One of the objectives of the visit was to inform the president that restrictions on trade of our products in the Andean Group market have been lifted. I want to especially stress the Colombian Government's decision to lift restrictions, provided that quality certificates accompany the products we export and import. [end recording]

Lara-Bonilla Anti-Drug Accord Formally Ratified

PY2203164991 Lima RTP Television Network in Spanish 0100 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Excerpt] The Rodrigo Lara-Bonilla accord was presented today during a ceremony at the Treaties Room of the Torres Tagle building.

Attending the ceremony were Prime Minister Carlos Torres y Torres Lara and Bolivian Ambassador Adalberto Violand Alcaraz, who delivered the ratification agreement.

The Lara-Bonilla agreement was signed in Lima on 30 April 1986 by Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela, all members of the Cartagena Accord. The agreement seeks to promote cooperation in the struggle against drug abuse and the illegal traffic of drugs and psychotropic substances. This agreement also seeks to harmonize policies and legislations on this matter, and to facilitate the development of programs for the struggle against those crimes.

This agreement will be in force as of today, following its ratification by the Bolivian ambassador.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified reporter] Is this the first step toward the signing of the anti-drug accord with the United States?

[Torres y Torres Lara] This is a complementary step. The Lara-Bonilla agreement was signed by the Andean countries to fight drug trafficking and to help establish an ethical economy. An agreement will then be signed between Peru, which is a drug-producing country, and the United States, which is a high-level consumer country. [end recording]

Uruguay

Lacalle: Military Prepared To Fight Terrorism

PY2203183891 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2245 GMT 19 Mar 91

[Text] Santiago, 19 Mar (EFE)—Uruguayan President Luis Alberto Lacalle said today that if anyone returned to the terrorist tactics of the past, there will be a very quick and surgical answer from an Army prepared for nontraditional combat.

Lacalle made these remarks in an interview published today by the Chilean magazine COSAS on occasion of the beginning of his three-day official visit to Santiago on 20 March.

Regarding the existence of groups in Uruguay that have necessitated the intervention of the Uruguayan Armed Forces, Lacalle said: "I have not asked them anything. Neither have I spoken to retired generals who have had no role to play," Lacalle added. "We will ask the Armed Forces to be ready just in case we need them. Let us hope this will not be necessary and that they will continue to respect the Constitution and the law," Lacalle stressed.

Asked if the military would be needed to defend the country from foreign aggression, the Uruguayan president said: "They will be needed on both counts. In a country like ours the Armed Forces have to be ready to defend the country from any of the three kinds of aggression [foreign aggression, and urban and rural guerrillas]."

Lacalle added: "They are necessary, however, and here I want to make a point and without hesitation say that if anyone in Uruguay were to return to the terrorist tactics of the past there will be a very quick and surgical answer from an Army prepared for nontraditional combat."

Lacalle said that the military is also ready for "such warfare—urban and rural guerrilla action—something that we know regretfully well."

The Uruguayan president will arrive in Santiago tomorrow. On 21 March he will be received by the National Congress in Valparaiso and he will attend a dinner in his honor at the presidential La Moneda Palace where Lacalle will be decorated by his Chilean counterpart Patricio Aylwin.

The two presidents will meet again on 22 March. On 23 March Lacalle will hold a news conference and then return home.

Air Force Head Denies Military's Politicization

PY2503231591 Montevideo BUSQUEDA in Spanish 21 Mar 91 p 13

[Excerpts] Carlos Pache, the Air Force commander in chief, has emphatically denied that the government is promoting "the politicization of the Armed Forces." He stressed that he has "never" been pressed to assign, appoint, or promote military men because of their partisan positions.

Civilian and military officials of the government, headed by former President Julio Sanguinetti, pointed out a year ago that, since his inauguration, President Luis Lacalle has introduced partisan politics into the Armed Forces, favoring officers who are members of the National Party.

On Sunday 17 March, during a ceremony in which the Air Force commemorated its 78th anniversary, Pache said: "I challenge the falsehood of those expressions that insult and offend us and that remind us of past times when the Armed Forces were said to be serving the oligarchies and when we were led into confrontations and situations that we hope will not be repeated."

Addressing President Lacalle, Montevideo Mayor Tabare Vazquez, and generals from the three branches of the Armed Forces, Pache said that "recently and regularly" the issue of the "politicization of the Armed Forces" has been addressed "by various media sources, trying to give the impression that members of the Armed Forces are supporting this or that political party."

Pache pointed out: "I can assure you, on my honor as an officer and a gentleman, that, when proposing an assignment, an appointment, or a promotion, I have never received any inquisition, suggestion, or pressure to favor this or that person based on partisan leanings."

He added: "Assignments, appointments, and promotions have always been based on personal abilities and professional conduct, and in the interest of the service. [no closing quotation mark as published]

The military leader said that "at no time during the former government when I was brigadier general, nor during the year that I have been the commander in chief, have I received the slightest hint in this respect."

Pache pointed out that he would have not accepted any pressure in that regard "although it would have ended the career that I embraced at the age of 15."

He noted: "The Armed Forces do not belong to political parties. The Armed Forces are loyal to the democratic institutions forming the cornerstone of the Nation. We will maintain our loyalty to the Constitution and to the law."

The Air Force commander in chief said: "The democratic renewal (...) of public men" and "their actions, their attitudes, their deeds, and their ideas, cannot and must not change the professional conscience" of the military men and their "basic conduct."

Pache concluded by saying: "The Armed Forces have finally achieved the single duty of defending the fatherland."

On Thursday 7 March, Defense Minister Mariano Brito said that the executive branch is determined "to increase the professionalism" of the Armed Forces and considers it "insulting" to the officers "to claim that their decisions are being politicized."

Officials of the former administration have given as examples of partisan politics, in favor of the National Party, the recent promotions and appointments of generals, the president's apparent intention to appoint a Blanco [National Party] general as commander in chief as of 1 February 1992, and some mid-level changes at the Defense Ministry (See BUSQUEDA Nos. 577 and 578) [28 Feb-13 March and 7-13 March 1991 editions].

On Sunday 17 March, Brigadier General Carlos Pache, the Air Force commander in chief, spoke at a ceremony during which he received 17 Beechcraft T-34 Mentor airplanes—twin-seater, single-engined planes for training—that were donated by Spain. He announced that the Uruguayan Air Force is trying to purchase four-engined "Hercules" C-130B's and other aircraft for advanced training. [passage omitted]

The Air Force currently has A-37 Dragonfly's, Pucaras, and T-33 fighters and advanced training aircraft. The transport service, including the TAMU [expansion unknown] service to the interior of the country, uses Spanish-made CASA Aviocar twin-engined planes and Brazilian-made "Bandeirante" twin-engined planes. The Fairchild and Focker F-27 airplanes are out of service due to technical problems and a lack of funds for their maintenance. [passage omitted]

Possible Visit by Brazilian President Reported

PY2503213591 Montevideo Radio El Espectador Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 25 Mar 91

[Text] According to official Uruguayan Government spokesmen, Brazilian President Fernando Collor will probably travel to Uruguay tomorrow on a private visit to Punta del Este, where he will rest until 31 March. The report has not, however, been confirmed.

As is known, the Brazilian president will travel to Asuncion, Paraguay, on 26 March to sign the Mercosur [Common Market of the South] treaty, which will be also signed by Argentine President Carlos Menem, Paraguayan President Andres Rodriguez, and Uruguayan President Luis Alberto Lacalle, who will also travel tomorrow.

It has been reported that Collor will accompany Lacalle on his way back to Uruguay, and that the two presidents will go to Punta del Este where they will take advantage of the informal visit to address issues that could not be analyzed at a meeting they recently held on the border.

The possibility of the informal and private visit—which has not yet been confirmed—was considered at the 11 March meeting that the two presidents held at the border towns of Artigas, on the Uruguayan side, and Quarai, on the Brazilian side.

Venezuela

Student Killed, 3 Injured in Clash With Troops

PA2203193691 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 1827 GMT 22 Mar 91

[Text] Caracas, 22 Mar (NOTIMEX)—A student was killed and three others were injured early this morning in another clash between college students and Army troops in the Andean city of Merida, according to official reports.

Two Venezuelan Andean states, Merida and Trujillo, were militarized today to prevent further clashes between students and security forces, which, in the past two days, have resulted in the death of two youths and a dozen serious injuries.

In Trujillo, 565 km from Caracas, Lieutenant Colonel Cesar Zumeta, commander of the Army garrison, reported that administrative activities were suspended and that the Armed Forces are patrolling cities in the state to prevent further disorders.

The Armed Forces were mobilized on the order of Governor Jose Mendez Quijada after groups of students had engaged in street riots and looting to protest the death of 21-year-old student Ramon Dario Cadenas.

During more clashes early this morning, 23-year-old Magdiell Paez Garcia, a student from Los Andes University, was killed. According to authorities, the youth was allegedly shot to death with a submachine gun. Three other individuals were injured by bullets.

Attorney General Ramon Escovar Salom has instructed the district attorneys in the states of Merida and Trujillo to deal with the crisis.